

# Growing Parent®

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## The special needs of the quiet child

By Charlotte Jones

We have all heard parents talk about their "quiet" child.

"She is so quiet, we hardly notice her."

"We forgot him at Grandma's house one day. We got home and no one missed him until his dog came looking for him."

It's less stressful to be around the quiet child. The quiet child is easier to raise — without the noise, the demands, the emotional outbursts common to more outgoing children.

Even in a family of two children, a mother often says, "Oh, Laura is the chatterbox. Jill goes about her life quietly and no one knows she's around."

And, of course, the only child — by the fact of being an only — might be quiet and reserved.

It is not "wrong" or "bad" to be



the quiet child. Neither is it "right" or "good" to be the chatterbox. But the quiet child should not be ignored in the face of demands from a more vocal child.

Sometimes there are reasons the quiet child is quiet. Sometimes there are hidden feelings of which parents aren't aware. Let's look at what *might* be going on inside a quiet child.

### Fears

Many quiet children are fearful — of things real, unreal, misunderstood, or imagined.

Fear of spiders. Fear of failure. Fear of people. Fear of rejection. Fear of men with beards. Fear of teasing.

Fears need to be met, talked about, explored, understood, accepted. Alternatives should be suggested and explanations made.

Talk with your child about grown-ups' fears. Encourage him to talk about childrens' fears — especially his own.

A quiet child especially might fear people and needs to know that most people are not plotting a kidnapping or planning a way to harm him.

If he is fearful, he needs help in learning to trust.

### Self-confidence

The quiet child often lacks self-confidence or the sense of power over his own life.

#### In this issue

Special needs of the quiet child .....	Page 1
What are quiet children saying by their silence?	
86 ways to say "Very Good!" .....	Page 4
Prescription for a happy home: Give a compliment every day!	
Are your child's emotional needs being met? .....	Page 5
Self-respect begins at home. Writer Sharon Epstein talks about how to help your child be more independent and self-confident.	
Editor's page .....	Page 7
Let's give parenting the positive image it deserves!	
Calendar.....	Page 8
Fun things to do with your child in February	

#### Coming next month

- Taking the fear out of children's nightmares
- Discovering the joys of lap-reading
- Tips on keeping your special valentine happy

Continued on next page

Help your child find things at which he can excel.

Praise him often.

"Thank you for setting the table."

"You did a good job getting dressed this morning."

Find things to bolster his self-worth.

He might be reluctant or afraid to try new experiences. Or he might be easily discouraged if he fails. Giving in to his fears will reinforce his belief that he can't succeed in unfamiliar circumstances.

Insist he do things independently. Assign responsibilities, duties, chores. Give him experiences that will build his confidence.

Challenge him. Make him grow. Success begets success!

It's not enough that you tell him he's a great kid. He has to be great at something. He has to feel worthy of his own approval and the praise of others.

Children need to feel they have an influence over their own lives. The quiet child often unquestioningly leaves his fate in the hands of others.

Of course, this is not to suggest that a child be made king/queen of the household. Only that it is important for parents to establish some balance, some victories for the child.

### Expressing emotions

Often the quiet child does not want to risk losing your approval. He will bottle up anger, hold back tears, hide his feelings.

If siblings have teased or

humiliated the quiet child about his feelings, this might seem more reason to mask his emotions.

Assure him that emotions — both positive and negative — are normal and should be vented. Tell him what to do when he's angry. Encourage him to cry when he's sad.

The quiet child could grow into an adult who has difficulty expressing affection. Encourage him to physically express his love. Ask for a hug. Say how you like to hold hands. Request kisses.

Say "I love you." Say it often.

Ask yourself how you love your child. Do you express your love even while disciplining him? Or do you use love as a bribe for when the child does the "right thing" or is "good"? Love must be given freely, not doled out as a reward for appropriate behavior.

"Have you hugged your kid today?" is a bumper sticker slogan that contains some good advice about touching. Physical contact between parent and child is important and it's never too late to start.

### Taking risks

Home is comfortable. The world is scary. If a child is quiet and stays out of the way, he can play in the house and not risk being rejected by neighborhood kids or being embarrassed by a neighbor or being scared by a stranger.

Life is a risk and risk is necessary to survival for both children and adults. Teach your child to take risks: Start small and reward him with praise whether he was successful or not.

Of course, parents must keep a positive attitude and expect the child to succeed.

### Time together

Take time to be alone with  
Continued on next page

## Shy or Quiet: what's the difference?

There is a fine line between "quiet" and "shy."

Shyness implies inadequacy, an inability to deal with people or situations, an inability to communicate thoughts or feelings.

The major difference between "shy" and "quiet" is the child's comfort and happiness. Is he alone or is he lonely? Does he prefer not to say anything, or does he want to express himself but is afraid or unable to do so? Does he have positive or negative feelings about himself? Is he happy?

The shy child is self-conscious and fears others' evaluations and/or rejections. The quiet child is probably making evaluations of others. (Ask his opinions. His insight might surprise you!)

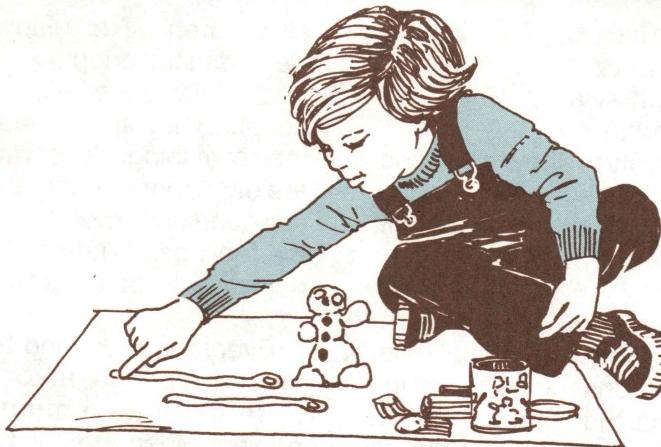
The shy child is unable to reach out to others, take risks, approach new situations. The shy child holds feelings and emotions inside. He/she may be unpopular and uncomfortable around peers.

It is important for parents to observe and know their child.

Most people are naturally shy to a certain degree. We don't rush into new situations, talk to every stranger we meet, nor share our every thought, idea, or emotion.

But the "quiet" child has the potential of crossing the line into shyness. If he is not encouraged to communicate and does not express himself, he could develop self-doubts, real or imagined rejections and misinterpretations of others' comments or lack of communication.

It is important for the parents of a "quiet" child to communicate verbally and non-verbally to reinforce the child's self-worth and to provide a supportive home life.



each child regularly. Don't let the quiet child get cheated simply because he doesn't demand his share of your time.

Be a friend. Show him you don't only love him because he's your child, but you like him for his own qualities and personality.

### Communication

The quiet child often has difficulty expressing himself.

Have *real* conversations with him. Don't allow the chatterbox of the family to interrupt, monopolize the conversation or answer for the quiet child.

Encourage the quiet child to talk. Ask him questions. Listen to his answers. Let supper be late or delay bedtime to let him express his feelings.

Sometimes quiet children are unconsciously encouraged to be so. "A nice, quiet child . . ." ". . . so good and quiet . . ." Simple phrases or innocent comments might tell your child to withhold communication.

We live in a verbal society. Self-expression is vitally important to succeed in our world.

### Sensitivity

The quiet child is usually sensitive to others' comments and opinions.

Help your child understand that people sometimes say things they don't necessarily mean or that we don't necessarily like.

Explain that it's not important that everyone like him. Because people are all different, some will like him and others won't — but it is important that he like himself.

### Expectations

All children need to have a clear knowledge of what is expected of them — socially, academically, physically.

Then they need approval that they are living up to parents' and society's expectations. They need to feel they are acceptable.

Some research has shown that reserved, quiet or shy children are frequently denied parental guidance in making decisions. They feel uncertain and anxious about doing the right thing.

Others are insecure about their inability to meet unrealistically high expectations of parents.

Reasonable structure, standards and discipline give children a safer, more predictable world in which to live.

### Discipline

When any child misbehaves, he should be disciplined. Parents will sometimes overlook unacceptable conduct of a quiet child, fearing they will damage him psychologically.

But kids aren't dumb. The child knows what he did. He also knows he can manipulate his parents with his reserved manner. Ignoring misbehavior in the

quiet child encourages him to continue to act in the same way in order to avoid punishment in the future.

### Personal appearance

Our own children are beautiful to us. But how does the world see them?

Even the very young can sense the disdain of adults and feel the hurt of rejection by peers. Unfair as it is, children are often ignored or sometimes criticized on their appearance. Rejection from society because of a poor personal appearance can make the reserved child retreat even more.

Bodily cleanliness, combed hair, clean clothing should be within the reach of any family, rich or poor.

Unfortunately, too often "different" is treated as "wrong." The child whose clothes or hair is "different" might have to face close scrutiny and justify his appearance. While some children can handle such treatment, the quiet child usually needs to "fit in."

### Friends

The most obvious trait of the quiet child is probably his small circle of friends or even the absence of friends.

Here are some suggestions in helping your quiet child develop friendships:

- Encourage him to invite a friend to your home.
- Offer to include a friend in a family outing.
- Show an interest in the friend, but don't embarrass either child.
- Provide opportunities for your child to be around other children in non-threatening situations.
- Be careful not to force a friendship.
- Make positive comments about your child's friend.

*Continued on next page*

- Let your child see you entertaining — providing refreshments, visiting, playing games, laughing, enjoying each other's company.

### Change

Most change in family life is minor. But when your family faces a major change, don't allow the quiet child to withdraw.

Moving, death of a loved one, divorce, or financial crisis necessitates communication, expressing feelings, setting new goals, relying on friends. The child who has trouble expressing feelings about minor events will certainly need extra help through major crises.

Watch carefully for danger signals such as:

- Withdrawal.
- Depression.
- Inability to show emotions or communicate.
- Prolonged loss of appetite.
- Prolonged difficulties in sleeping.

If signs of serious trouble develop, get professional help. A trained counselor can zero in on problems that parents or other persons close to the child cannot.

A wise man once said, "All people have one thing in common: they are all different." These differences are what keeps the world interesting.

Don't inadvertently try to make

all children alike. Many happy, well-adjusted people — children and adults alike — are private people. They are "loners," doing their own thing. Reserved people are often more observant of their surroundings, more sensitive to the feelings of others, and more objective in their decision-making.

Everyone must find their own level of social involvement. Parental intervention is only needed when the child's adjustment and happiness are seriously impaired.

Charlotte Jones writes for major national publications including Good Housekeeping, Family Weekly, and Baby Talk. She is a frequent contributor to Growing Parent.

## 86 ways to say "Very Good!"

1. Good for you!
2. Superb.
3. You did that very well.
4. You've got it made.
5. Terrific!
6. That's not bad!
7. Couldn't have done it better myself.
8. Marvellous!
9. You're doing fine.
10. You're really improving.
11. You're on the right track now!
12. Now you've figured it out.
13. Outstanding!
14. That's coming along nicely.
15. I knew you could do it.
16. Good work.
17. You figured that out fast.
18. I think you've got it now.
19. I'm proud of the way you worked today.
20. Tremendous!
21. You certainly did well today.
22. Perfect!
23. Nice going.
24. You've got your brain in gear today.
25. Now you've got the hang of it.
26. WOW!

27. Wonderful!
28. You're getting better every day.
29. You're learning fast.
30. You make it look easy.
31. That's a good boy/girl.
32. That's very much better.
33. Super!
34. You did a lot of work today!
35. Keep it up!
36. You've got that down pat.
37. Congratulations.
38. Exactly right!
39. Nice going.
40. Excellent!
41. Sensational!
42. You're doing beautifully.
43. You've just about mastered that!
44. That's really nice.
45. That's the best ever.
46. That's great.
47. Way to go!
48. That's the way to do it!
49. That's quite an improvement.
50. Good thinking.
51. You're really going to town.
52. Keep up the good work.
53. That's it!
54. That's better.
55. You haven't missed a thing.
56. Fantastic!
57. You outdid yourself today!
58. You're doing a good job.
59. That's the right way to do it.
60. That's better.
61. Right on!
62. Well, look at you go!
63. That's the best you've ever done.
64. That's RIGHT!
65. You must have been practicing!
66. Great!
67. Keep working on it, you're getting better.
68. You remembered!
69. That kind of work makes me very happy.
70. You're really working hard today.
71. That's what I call a fine job!
72. I knew you could do it!
73. I'm very proud of you.
74. One more time and you'll have it.
75. Fine!
76. That's good.
77. Good job.
78. You really make this fun.
79. Good remembering.
80. Nothing can stop you now.
81. You are doing much better today.
82. Keep on trying.
83. You are really learning a lot.
84. You've just about got it.
85. I've never seen anyone do it better.
86. You are very good at that.

# Children's emotional growth: Eight important areas

By Sharon S. Epstein

Being a parent is a hard job. Even the most patient mothers and the most loving fathers can attest to the daily difficulties of raising children.

The problems are in some ways unique to each family, but there are some areas of emotional growth that are important to all children. These are being listened to, learning to solve problems, being praised for accomplishments, learning values, taking responsibility, learning from criticism, being fairly disciplined, and being part of a family.

## Listening

One of the main objectives of raising children is helping them become independent and self-confident. Such learning is helped along by parents who are interested in what a child has to show and tell them. Parental listening promotes a child's sense of self-importance.

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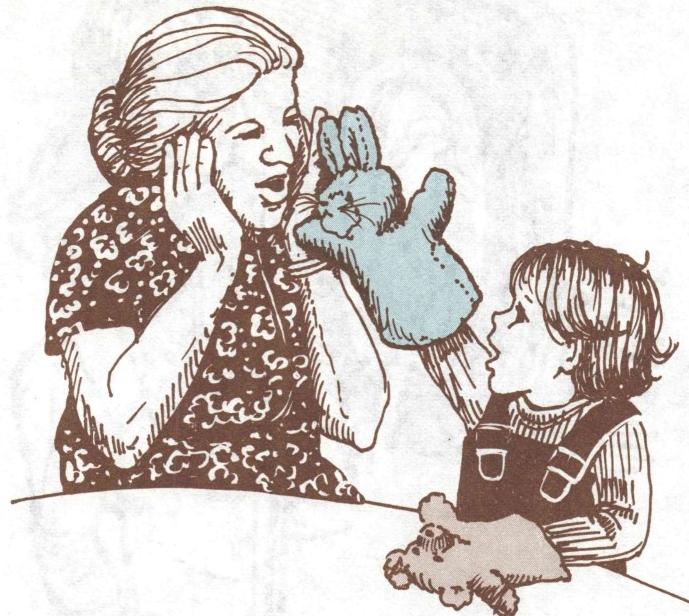
If a child is praised for what she can do well, taught to take on still more responsibilities, and given tasks appropriate for her age, she generally develops a high self-esteem.

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The problem is that parents cannot always stop what they are doing to look or listen. Giving the child a reason why not and promising a specific time later teaches a child patience.

## Problem solving

A child needs to develop problem-solving skills. If she is constantly told what to do by her parents, she will continue to depend on someone else to give her the answers. A child who is



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**Parental listening promotes a child's sense of self-importance.**

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encouraged to think about possible solutions and pick those that might work develops a method for thinking about a problem.

At times she may need suggestions, but as long as these are given as suggestions and not orders the child learns to take responsibility for the solutions she chooses. If the problem is satisfactorily solved, the child can feel proud that she solved it. If the solution she chooses was not the best, but she is praised for trying, she will want to try again.

It is good practice to give even very young children exercises in making choices. For example, a two-year-old might be given a choice between the green shirt and the blue one. A four-year-old might choose between two restaurants. Having a say in decisions can have an enormously positive influence on a child.

## Praise for accomplishments

A child needs to feel the significant people in her life are proud

of her accomplishments. This message can be given by hugging and kissing as well as with words. A first step or a pretty picture are obvious times for praise. Less obvious times are good too — for example, when a messy child shows the slightest sign of neatness. It doesn't matter how the accomplishment stacks up in relation to other children. The important thing is that the child accomplished something.

## Teaching values

A child learns by observation, especially of parents. If told, "Don't do as I do, do as I say," he is all the more likely to try out the behavior he sees. And a child who is told what to do all the time grows up either dependent on others for advice about every one of his actions — or rebellious.

Parents can encourage values development in a variety of ways. They can encourage chil-

Continued on next page



dren to watch television programs and listen to stories which teach moral lessons and then talk about those lessons. Any discussion that allows a child to ask questions and try to come to some of his own conclusions about morality and values is very helpful.

#### **Children need to learn that making mistakes is a natural part of living and learning.**

When children see values being cast aside (a parent swears or tells a lie), the child can be given a reason why the value is not at work (anger, desire not to hurt someone's feelings). This teaches that no one is perfect all the time.

#### **Taking responsibility**

An independent child feels she is an important and worthy part of the family. If she is praised for what she can do well, taught to take on still more responsibilities, and given tasks appropriate for her age, she generally develops a high self-esteem.

The best a parent can do in this regard is to let a child do things for herself, especially when she wants to. Dressing, wiping dishes, collecting garbage, or holding tools are all things children can do. Even an 18-month-old is capable of fetching her own diaper or putting away folded laundry.

#### **Learning from criticism**

A child who is constantly called names and criticized for doing the wrong thing will have difficulty acquiring self-confidence in her ability to act correctly. She may misbehave simply to get attention.

Children need to learn that making mistakes is a natural part of living and learning. When a child does something wrong, a parent can explain why it was wrong. If the mistake was unintentional, it is important to let the child know that everyone makes mistakes and that mistakes should not prevent trying again.

#### **Applying discipline**

Punishment should be meted out at the time of the offense and in proportion to the severity of the offense. The timing is important because otherwise the child may honestly not remember why he is being punished.

The type of punishment is also important. Continual yelling may force the child to "tune out" a parent. Continual hitting makes a child feel inferior and helpless without solving the problem. It's best for the child to be given the chance to discuss the behavior and come to an understanding of why it was wrong and how to remedy it.

#### **Being part of a family**

It can be a major problem for children if they are used as pawns in a battle between parents. Children are sometimes used by one spouse to get even with another. Sometimes a parent living in an unsatisfactory marriage lives vicariously through the child, not allowing him to become independent and have a life of his own.

It is also important that everyone in the family has their emotional and physical needs taken care of — without anyone else feeling taken advantage of or neglected. This applies to mothers' and fathers' needs, as well as to children's needs.

Being a good parent is a job that needs continual work. It is healthy to talk about problems and to admit to and laugh about mistakes. A child is marvelously resilient and as long as he sees that his parents are trying to be genuine, loving, and caring toward him, he will learn to become an independent and self-confident adult.

Sharon S. Epstein is a social worker, columnist, and freelance writer.

# From the Editor



Nancy  
Kleckner

## Parents do a pretty good job!

I'm tired of reading about how difficult it is to raise children.

That doesn't mean I think childrearing is easy . . . far from it. I'm talking about the abundance of literature these days that approaches parenting as though it were some kind of survival course.

If you believe everything you read, childhood is a desperate time for parents who must suffer through the most miserable experiences imaginable that include disastrous episodes in toilet training, temper tantrums, and sleepless nights, to name a few.

And if that isn't enough, long before your children read adolescence, you're going to read about how difficult teenagers are. It's no wonder parents are insecure — we're being conditioned to believe the worst about the people we love the most.

But there is a positive side to all of this. And you deserve to know it: It is possible for families to go through the growing up and maturing process without dire consequences, without totally disrupting households, and with tempers, personalities and relationships intact.

It is important for you to know that things are going to happen as your children grow up that will fill you with delight, that will make you laugh out loud and sometimes, cry with happiness.

All of us need to talk about these happy experiences; we need to give "childrearing" a good name. I know of no long-lasting, negative effects on children (or anyone else, for that matter) caused by a positive attitude. And a positive attitude can have an effect on your life and your children **every single day!**

What can you do to pass along the positive side of parenting? Here are a few suggestions:

**1. Monkey see, monkey do.** Be a good role model for other parents. When they ask

about your experiences in a particular situation, by all means, share what happened. But be sure that includes the positive stuff: "We were so pleased that Jeremy responded to our attention." "We felt really good about how we handled the situation." This also has a boomerang effect: You'll find you have done quite a few things that are good, positive and rewarding as parents.

### **2. Look for good news and pass it on.**

Every time you find yourself relating some experience to your parents, friends, or neighbors, listen to what you're saying. If it turns out you're only talking about the bad times, make a conscious effort to include more good times. When you start watching your children for good behavior and positive efforts, you'll be surprised how often you find them! And what happens when you notice and reinforce "good" behavior? You're going to see more of it.

### **3. Cultivate a healthy sense of humor.**

Having a sense of humor doesn't necessarily mean that you laugh heartily at the jokes on a television sitcom. It means you can see the realness and humanity of yourself and others. You realize everyone can make mistakes because we're all human, subject to error and thus, can be forgiven. Studies have shown again and again the benefits of being able to laugh with others and at ourselves. Here again, those around you will pick up the positive cues that the world is a pretty good place to live in, that children have a positive effect on your life.

I've given you three ideas for how to be positive about being parents; why not drop me a line and tell me about yours?

*Nancy Kleckner*



# Fun things to do in February

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

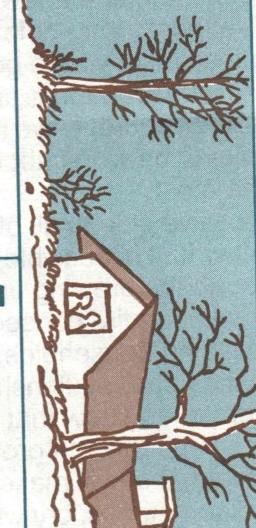
Thursday

Friday

Saturday

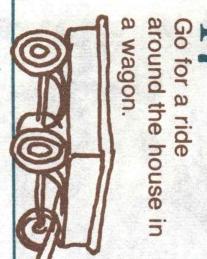
## Growing Child

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**3**  
Feel the different textures of the winter coats in your house.

**10**  
Make Valentines with red and white paper—let your child "draw" with a red crayon.



**24**  
Talk about what you're going to do tomorrow.



**4**  
What words rhyme with "cold"?



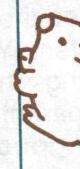
**11**  
Decorate a shoebox to hold Valentines.



**5**  
Grow a sweet potato in a glass of water.



**12**  
Lincoln's Birthday. Put shiny new pennies in the piggy bank.



**6**  
Sing "Old Susannah"



**13**  
Make red jello for dessert tomorrow.



**7**  
Play a "hiding-finding" game with a toy in your pocket.



**14**  
Valentine's Day. Kisses for everyone, wear red and white.



**8**  
Reward "Junior" with a hug when toys are picked up.

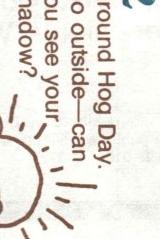


**15**  
Sit on the floor and roll a ball back and forth to each other.



**9**

Is there a smoke alarm near your child's room? Are the batteries still good?



**16**

Go to the library and look for a book about summer!



**20**

Ash Wednesday. Fresh fruit for a snack.



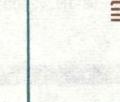
**21**

Warm lemonade is soothing on a sore throat.



**22**

Washington's Birthday. Make a dessert with cherries in it.



**23**

Have you ever eaten fried mush? Sounds yucky, tastes good!



**26**

Read Goodnight Moon before going to bed.



**27**

What would you do if... a stranger offered you candy?



**28**

Practice somersaults, forwards and backwards.



## Nightmares or Sweet Dreams?

*Nightmares are very common among preschoolers. Here's why they happen and how parents can help keep those dream monsters at bay.*

By Marilyn Pribus

"MAAaaa-MEEeeee!"

Danny's wispy wail roused me from deep sleep. It was the middle of the night, my husband was away and our three-year-old was having another nightmare.

"The piggy's gonna get me! It's got big red eyes!" he cried as I comforted him.

A few days later I saw Danny's "piggy." A young playmate had a wind-up toy which lumbered along with a mechanical lurch as its red eyes flashed from some interior mechanism.

This was the source of the nightmares, but how could I protect my son from a six-inch-high toy? There are scary things



everywhere and Danny's bad dreams worried me. Was there something wrong with my child? Was I doing something wrong? Was there something I could be doing to help?

### Nightmares

Bad dreams and nightmares are very common in children from as young as one year old to around six. Most specialists consider them a perfectly normal part of a child's development. They note, however, that nightmares often increase in response to stress or a perceived threat, just as my son's bad dreams frequently coincided with his father's trips.

Nightmares may also follow traumatic incidents such as an injury, family separation, or a serious illness.

Experts indicate that "things" don't lead to nightmares, feelings do. I came to realize that in my son's case, the mechanical pig wasn't causing the bad dreams; it was merely a familiar, slightly scary object which translated itself into nightmares while Daddy was away.

### Dreams vs. reality

Children younger than four have difficulty differentiating between dreams and reality, so if your child dreams about something frightening — a bear or monster or tiger — confront it together **as a dream**. Don't do anything to imply the dream is true. For instance, it can be very harmful to pretend to shoot a "monster" as if you believe it is real. This gives validity to the nightmare but doesn't prevent its recurrence.

It's far more effective to turn on a light, open the closet door, and look under the bed together in a serious but calm way. Don't dismiss the bad dream as imagination or silliness. Instead, state it was a dream or nightmare and that although the dream or nightmare was real, the creatures populating it were not and offer no danger.

It's a good idea to talk with your child about a nightmare. Your natural feeling might be to ignore it, hoping it will be forgotten, but by reviewing and discussing the dream, you give your child control over it.

### In this issue

#### Nightmares ..... Page 1

Bad dreams are normal. It helps children to know that the dream is real but the monsters are not.

#### Lap-reading ..... Page 3

A lap and a book are a great combination.

#### Happy valentine's! ..... Page 5

Don't take your spouse for granted! Tips for keeping the love alive.

## Confronting dream monsters

It is important to help a child tell the difference between fact and fantasy. By the time a child can distinguish between a dream and reality, which for some can occur as early as three and a half to four years of age, you can suggest that dream adversaries, whether machines or monsters or people, can be confronted.

Five-year-old Katy told about "real scary stuff" where she was pursued by a "space robot" but couldn't run away. In discussions, her father pointed out that there were no space robots in her daily life — only those she saw on television — so if she "saw" one she'd know she was dreaming. If she found herself unable to run away she could inform the robot it was only part of her dream, or she could even turn around and attack it safely since a robot in a dream was

powerless to injure her. In fact she might prefer direct confrontation to flight even if she found she could run.

## Night Terrors

Two-year-old Jason woke screaming. When his parents rushed to his room they found him terrified and confused; his pulse was racing and he was damp with perspiration.

Night terrors, which have a physical origin, differ from nightmares. Most typical in a child under the age of two, they are characterized by amnesia, where the victim may not recognize the parents, doesn't remember the dream or may only have a vague sense of one overwhelmingly frightening thing.

There are other differences, probably the major one being that while dreams occur during REM (rapid-eye movement)

sleep, night terrors occur during the deepest sleep cycle, often during the first hours of the night. Perspiration, which does not usually occur during nightmares, is characteristic of night terrors.

Most experts believe that the night terrors of childhood, which almost always disappear by the age of six, are simply caused by a child's immature nervous system. They are often more frightening to the parents than to the youngster, for sometimes while in the throes of night terror the child can't be "reached," or there may be dazed sleepwalking. Reassurance and hugging will gradually calm your little one — who will rarely recall the event in the morning.

## A warning signal?

Most young children have very few emotionally loaded dreams. Typically it isn't until youngsters are eight or nine that they have enough of a "self" character involved in dreams or nightmares to be significant. However, if a child of any age has the same bad dream many times it could be an indication that something is wrong and professional help may be sought. Nightmares may be symptoms of emotional disorders or even, in rare instances, physical illness.

For the vast majority of children, however, bad dreams are a perfectly normal part of growing and will gradually decrease. The best support a parent can provide is calm, compassionate, matter-of-fact acceptance of the reality of a dream, but not the reality of its contents. Reassurance that everyone dreams and everyone has bad dreams from time to time should help your child cope with occasional nightmares.

## Tips for getting a child into bed

Here are some ideas for getting a child into bed.

- Have a set bed time. "When the big hand is on the six" or "When the clock says these numbers" can be part of the routine. In this way the clock, not the parent, is announcing the time to retire. A warning of "ten minutes until bath time" is also useful so that fun isn't suddenly interrupted.
- Minimize television and rowdy activities close to sleeping time.
- A routine works wonders. For instance, a warm, calm bath followed by a bedtime story, followed by a ritual goodnight to the spider plant, the clock, grandma and grandpa in a picture, the dog, the piano, the typewriter, the sofa . . . (If you keep it up long enough you may find yourself yawning. And speaking of yawns, a few of those don't hurt either.)
- If necessary, provide a small nightlight, a quiet radio, or a trusted companion. (Nick, age 5, has a stuffed penguin fully a foot longer than he, and I'm sure Penny helps keep away those things that go bump in the night.)
- If your child doesn't fall asleep at once, there's no harm in reading or playing quietly in bed even after "bedtime." A child can't go to sleep on demand, any more than an adult, but often if you tiptoe in only ten or fifteen minutes later, you'll find your youngster overtaken by the sandman. Then just switch off the light and whisper, "Sweet dreams . . . ."

Marilyn Pribus is an author, a mother, and a teacher whose work has appeared several times in *Growing Parent*. She lives in Fair Oaks, California.

# Start a lap-sized love affair with your little ones

*Sitting down with a child and a book can untangle frazzled nerves, calm disorder, and restore joviality and good temper to your household.*

By Paula A. Patton

It's time for parents all over America to sit down! Yes, let the housework go, let the grass grow another inch, forget about cleaning out the garage.

Choose your favorite easy chair, couch, or rocking chair. Sit down, get comfortable, grab a book and invite one or more of your children to nestle themselves into your lap. You won't have to ask twice. They'll come running.

Parental laps are cradles where children can be comforted, cheered, or cajoled. Combined with a read-out-loud story and five or ten minutes of attention, a lap takes on a throne-like status for children. There is nothing quite like those times of closeness and communication that come from sitting together and reading out loud, or "lap reading."

## An infrequent occurrence

Some observers fear that lap-reading is a dying form of interaction for this generation. What used to be daily routine is now an infrequent occurrence. Is this true in your home? If so, you're not alone.

Many parents buy toys that tell stories at the push of a button, stuffed animals that recite poetry at the pull of a cord, and wind-up record players that chatter fairy tales on command. What these parents have actually "bought"

is the idea that these mechanisms — along with the ever-present television set — can take the place of lap sitting and reading out loud.

Lap-reading is often perceived as an "old-fashioned" innovation — an unimportant part of childhood experience and parental privilege. In the space age, we expect our children to enjoy and respond to technology and have less need for and interest in touching and talking. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Tape-recorded voices and computerized responses will never adequately take the place of the nurturing elements of lap-reading. Television, even in technicolored, lifelike animation, will never approach the value of lap-reading when it comes to building relationships between parents and children.

## Start in infancy

Lap-reading can begin in the earliest days of infancy. True, newborns will not understand or remember what was read to them, but they do understand and remember something far more important.



Human babies have been shown to be able to recognize people by the sound of a voice as early as three to six days after birth. It is generally accepted that sound is the most sensitive response a newborn has at his disposal. Therefore, through repeated exposure to a voice, an infant develops a familiarity and comforting attachment to it.

"My second child was born during the televised coverage of the 1976 Olympics," a young mother relates. "The delivery was quick and I was bored in the hospital, so I sat in my room for hours at a time holding Kari and talking to her about the Olympic events I was watching on television. It may sound silly, but I think that may be why she still loves to be held, talked to, and read to, even though she's now eight years old."

If researchers are right, this young mother's idea isn't silly at all. In fact, there is even some evidence to support the idea that babies can hear human voices before they are born. Recent studies suggest that newborns can distinguish easily between familiar and unfamiliar voices.

**In the space age, we expect our children to enjoy technology and have less need for touching and talking. Nothing could be further from the truth.**

### **Content not important**

Presenting your familiar voice to a young child doesn't take a lot of time or planning. Infants will accept the editorial column just as readily as the recitation of a cookie recipe, although you will find at some point your lap-reading partner may express a distinct preference for more child-like subject matter!

Lap-reading can be shared at any age and at any time of day. Toddlers may be receptive to a "slow down" in the normal pace with a lap-reading session. Reading as an introduction to nap time might be especially appropriate for preschoolers.

Be careful, though, not to misinterpret the purpose of lap-reading. The goal is *not* to teach reading at an early age, but to provide a time of affirmation and communication. Few tiny tots have either the interest or the ability to acquire reading skills. Parents who use lap-reading as an opportunity to "test" the child's ability may actually sabotage the valuable benefits of the reading session.

However, when an atmosphere of love, attentiveness and communication is established, lap-reading will remain a popular event well after your child can read on his or her own.

### **Selection unlimited**

Choices of subject matter for lap reading sessions are unlimited. Personal preference will be the determining factor. It doesn't really seem to matter. That's because although children learn and enjoy familiar stories (as their age allows comprehension), they are more attracted by the comforting, reassuring voice of a parent and

enjoy the physical closeness that lap sessions offer.

A young father I know is in the very good habit of relaxing after work in his easy chair holding his four-month-old son and summarizing the headlines of the daily newspaper to him. Although some would raise their eyebrows at this, Ben reacts with coos and gurgles, sitting calmly in his father's arms.

"I started to read to Ben by ac-

children made-up stories. The little ones will enjoy the experience and this particular method of sharing has the advantage of extensive eye contact. Experts in the field of child psychology suggest that eye contact is the most personal and important way in which we can recognize our children.

You're not creative? Then pull out a copy of **National Geographic, Newsweek**, or any periodical with colorful picture essays. Young children will respond to the identification and description you offer of both familiar and unfamiliar objects.



cident," the father relates. "Before he was born, my ritual when I got home was to sit down with the evening paper. But Sharon needed help with him while she prepared supper, so I began to hold him. Gradually, rather than just read and ignore him, I started reading the comics out loud. He seemed to respond, so I've done it ever since."

If reading the newspaper out loud has little appeal to you, there are lots of other opportunities. You can tell infants and

### **Enrichment only one advantage**

The most important promise of lap-reading is that it can help create an enriched home environment and encourage the child to reach his full intellectual potential.

Lap-reading is also quiet and can provide a much-needed rest time, for both parents and children. It can untangle frazzled nerves, calm disorder, and restore joviality and good temper to a household.

Ultimately, lap-reading gives small children a distinct head start on developing a positive attitude about reading. The good feelings they associate with lap reading sessions are automatically extended to almost any other reading session. This carry-over incorporates good feelings about school and education in general.

A kindergarten teacher noted that "children who have been privileged with lap-reading just seem to be more interested in learning. They have somewhat

improved attention spans and are usually more articulate than children who have had little opportunity to be read to."

What a bargain! With lap-reading, parents get to take a break, children get to expand their horizons. Who could possibly find fault with the suggestion to plan for lap-reading sessions?

"I wonder what I've started sometimes," signs a busy mother of three. "Lap-reading has become so popular at our house that there's hardly any time for anything else!"

So you see, that's the chance you take. But it really is worth the risk. So sit down, be old-fashioned, and give your child the gift of your time and presence. You'll reap the benefits for many years, as you and your child experience a love affair with learning and with each other!

Paula Patton is a ten-year veteran of high school teaching in the areas of Education for Parenthood and Family Life Education. She is a mother of two and author of numerous articles on parenting and child development published in national magazines and journals.

## Keeping your valentine happy

By Wallace Denton

The biggest problem couples face is keeping their relationship alive and healthy.

Marriages fall apart in two ways. With some, there's a fanfare and noise and the whole community knows exactly what is happening. The second type is common in most marriages — the marriage gradually withers away while hardly anyone notices — even the couple may not be aware of drifting apart.

I call it the marital dry rot. Marriages suffering from dry rot can break up, but many continue. The partners, while neither unhappy or really happy, merely exist.

Routine can be one factor causing a disease in marriage. It can have an anesthetic effect on a relationship. Taking each other for granted is another common cause.

By consciously working at it, most couples can keep the marriage relationship alive. There are several ways to accomplish this, but many forget or refuse to practice them.

### Here's how

Some suggestions for keeping

the marriage healthy:

- Make time to be together. Studies show that strong families guard their time together. When outside matters begin to make inroads into this time, they are pruned away.

- Set money aside to accomplish things as a couple. The best things in life are still free, such as a smile, a kiss, and a hug. Money, however, sometimes makes it easier.

- Remember a spouse on special occasions with cards, surprises, notes, and other thoughtful things to make him or her feel loved and important.

- Be responsive toward your partner. An engaged couple may hold hands, touch, hug, and never take their eyes off each other; but people tend to forget to do this once they're married.

- Don't forget to smile. Research shows that regardless of where you are in the world, anyone can recognize and appreciate a smile, which is a universal language.

- Don't forget to touch your spouse often. This is one of the most powerful tools a couple has. A well-timed, non-demand-

ing touch conveys healing, love, sympathy, and other emotions.

- Don't forget to say "I love you." These three words often are forgotten but there's no substitute for them.

- Learn how to affirm and appreciate your partner. Strong families express their appreciation to each other often, and a successful marriage is a mutual admiration society. Each partner should let the other know how important he or she is.

### Watch little things

Remember that what goes wrong in a marriage usually is not a cessation of love; it is an accumulation of small unresolved failures.

Marriage is like fine silver — it has a tendency to tarnish. Buff it and make it sparkle and you'll find it easier to keep that "valentine."

Wallace Denton is director of the Marriage and Family Therapy Center and professor of child development and family studies at Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana. This article reprinted by permission from the *Purdue University Perspective*, Spring 1984.

# The Back Page

## Awards and honors

*Growing Parent* and *Growing Child Research Review* newsletters have been honored by the **Educational Press Association of America** in the 1984 EDPRESS Awards Program for Excellence in Educational Journalism.

*Growing Parent* issues were recognized for excellence in three categories:

(1) **Commercial Adult Newsletter.** Cited was the September, 1983 issue containing Charlotte Jones' article "What to do when a friend is grieving."

(2) **Commercial Adult Series.** Honored was the April, 1983 issue containing articles by Sharon Epstein ("Teaching children to be safe") and Raymond Schuessler ("Peanuts, pennies and pins").

(3) **Commercial Adult One-Theme Issue.** Winner was the October, 1983 issue including "Protecting your child from sexual abuse" by Charles and Audrey Riker.

Congratulations to these writers!

*Growing Child Research Review* was honored in the **Commercial Adult Newsletter category.** Congratulations to Virginia North Edwards, Research Editor!

## Changes at *Growing Child*

You'll note an important change in your ***Growing Child*** this month: the **Store** catalog has been discontinued.

We are eliminating the **Store** because we are making a substantial reduction in the number of playthings we offer. This means we can concentrate on a basic group of very special and important toys and books.

These selections will be the basic toys we believe every family with children or grandchildren should have—we call them "investment toys." They include items like blocks, sorting toys, pegboards—and they are an investment in your child's future.

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*Growing Parent & Growing Child* published monthly at 22 N. Second Street, Lafayette, IN 47902. Subscription rate \$15.95 yearly. Third class postage paid at Lafayette, IN 47902. ISSN: 0193-8037

They are playthings that transcend age and time. They have important play and developmental value, so they are the toys children learn from, grow with, and come back to enjoy over and over again.

Many items offered in the past will be discontinued, not because they aren't good, but because they are widely available in retail stores, often at less cost than we can provide them.

We'll also be offering you a limited selection of quality books from which you can build an excellent library for your soon-to-be reader. We'll be giving you reading lists, as well, for those books you'll want to borrow from your public library.

We will continue to offer our best plaything selections in every third issue of ***Growing Child*** and we will have a new catalog each year, just as in the past.

The monthly activities calendar will continue, too, and can be found this month in ***Growing Parent***.

Quality has always been our by-word for the playthings ***Growing Child*** offers: that will not change!

## Update

The **Stepfamily Bulletin**, listed under "Additional Resources" in the September, 1984 *Growing Parent* article on stepfamilies, is now published by:

Stepfamily Association of America, Inc.  
28 Allegheny Avenue, Suite 1307  
Baltimore, Maryland 21204

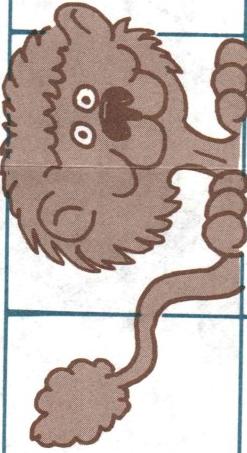
Subscriptions may be ordered from this address.

The **Bay Area Center for Victims of Child Stealing**, mentioned in the November, 1984 *Growing Parent* is now:

The Vanished Children's Alliance  
Post Office Box 2052  
Los Gatos, California 95031



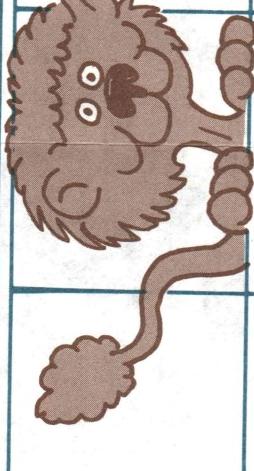
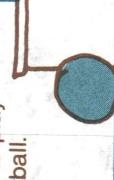
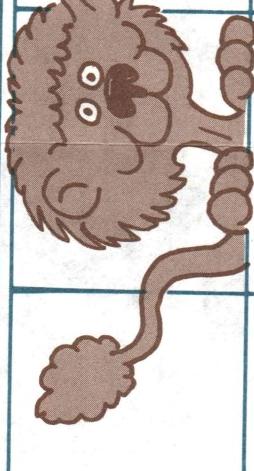
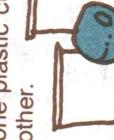
# Fun things to do in March



## Growing

**Dunn**  
A Division of Dunn & Hargitt, Inc.

For children 6-24 months

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>Growing Child</b> A Division of Dern & Hargitt, Inc.						
<b>For children 6-24 months</b>						
						
<b>3</b> As you make dinner, talk and explain to Baby what you are doing. 	<b>4</b> Cottage cheese and strawberries for a snack. 	<b>5</b> Look at a colorful magazine and let Baby turn the pages. 	<b>6</b> Give Baby a soft ball and a waste basket to play basketball. 	<b>7</b> What kind of sound does a sheep make? 	<b>8</b> Make a puppet out of an old sock. Glue on a face and "hair." 	<b>1</b> Did March come in like a lion? Go outside and tell Baby what the weather is like today. 
<b>10</b> Hang a family picture in Baby's room. 	<b>11</b> Make silly faces at each other. 	<b>12</b> Practice "pouring" a large wooden bead from one plastic cup to another. 	<b>13</b> Listen and sing to a record. 	<b>14</b> Count Baby's teeth. 	<b>15</b> Make green jello for this weekend. 	<b>2</b> Visit a pet store. 
<b>17</b> St. Patrick's Day. Wear lots of green. 	<b>18</b> Look for something blue to wear tomorrow. 	<b>19</b> Find four things in the living room that are round. 	<b>20</b> Look at a picture book—what can Baby name? 	<b>21</b> First day of spring! 	<b>22</b> Play with a push toy. 	<b>9</b> Soup for supper. 
<b>24</b> Pretend to talk to each other on the telephone. 	<b>25</b> Go outside and tie a balloon to Baby's wrist to blow in the wind. 	<b>26</b> Place a towel over your face and play peek-a-boo with Baby. 	<b>27</b> Sing "I'm a Little Teapot." 	<b>28</b> Play with cloth blocks. 	<b>29</b> Read a story before bed. 	<b>16</b> With easy-to-remove make-up, draw faces on Baby's knees. 
<b>31</b> Palm Sunday 						<b>30</b> Everyone wear sweatbands around the house. 

# Fun things to do in March

# Growing Parent®

March 1985  
Vol. 13 No. 3

## What's fair?

*"That's not fair!" is a lament often heard in families. But perhaps not being fair is the fairest way after all. . . .*

By Jodi Vernon

*"That's not fair!"  
"Her piece is bigger!"  
"You love him more than you  
love me!"*

The issue of fairness is an ongoing drama in most homes where there are two or more children. As hard as we try to be fair, we often hear the indignant complaint: "It's not fair!"

### Be fair: don't be fair

Strange as it may seem, a good way to be fair to siblings is not to be fair. Basically, this means treating each child as an individual and giving to each one when they need something. The key word is **need**.

For instance, Jenny **needs** a

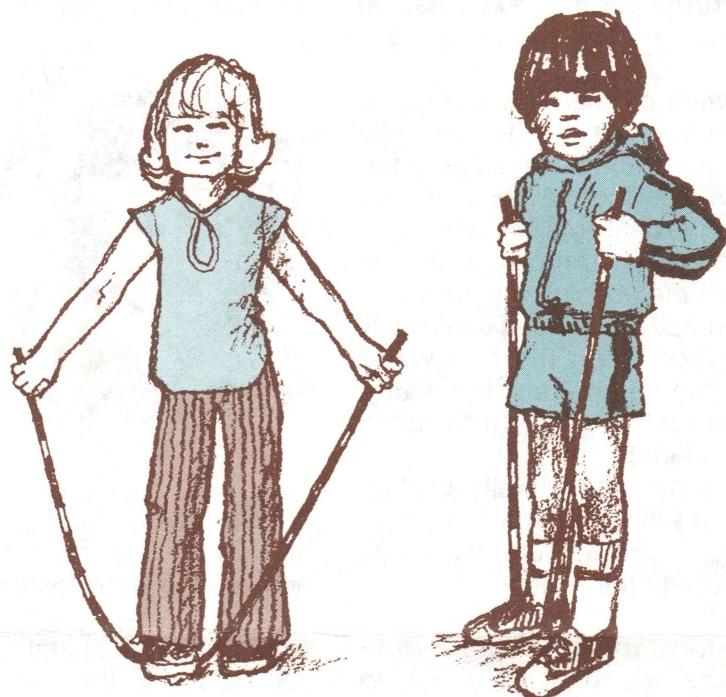
new coat for school. Her brothers can still wear their coats one more year. We buy the coat for Jenny because she needs one, and we buy absolutely nothing for her brothers. We respond to each child individually as the need arises.

"I have a difficult time accepting that concept," one mother objects. "How will a sibling understand that a new coat is fair because his sister needs it?"

### Teaching by example

We teach our children the meaning of fairness by what we do. When we buy a child a coat just because his sister is getting one, he learns he must constantly watch to see if he is getting as much as she is getting. In an attempt to avoid sibling rivalry by always being perfectly fair, we actually create competition.

On the other hand, if a child



knows he'll receive what he needs when he needs it, he is learning that fairness is a matter of feeling loved and protected when he needs it most.

### Important differences

When we try to make all things equal, we deny our children the right to be who they are. In fact, we ask them to be just like their brothers and sisters.

Melony, for example, loves to play the piano, so we give her lessons each week. We also try to force piano lessons on Heather because what we give one child we must give the other.

But Heather is very unhappy and not interested. Finally, we realize that she would rather draw pictures than play the piano. Responding to her need, we might provide her with paper and colored pencils instead.

Continued on next page

#### In this issue

**What's fair? . . . . . Page 1**  
Is everything equal between your children?

**Doldrum day escapes . . . . . Page 3**  
Here are some toddler activities to brighten dull March days.

**Letters . . . . . Page 5**  
Driveway safety, tips for keeping children happy in car seats.

**Editor's page . . . . . Page 6**

**Activity calendar (Birth to two years) . . . . . Page 7**

**Activity calendar (Two to six years) . . . . . Page 8**

**Life doesn't deal advantages and disadvantages in equal doses.**

### False expectations

A serious drawback with absolute fairness is that it gives our children a false expectation about what the world is really like.

When our child grows up, he might see that the boss' son gets the promotion because he is the boss' son, not always because he is the best qualified person for the job. Children raised according to the absolute fairness rule often battle a continual sense of injustice when the real world doesn't offer them the same steadfast concept of fairness they learned at home.

Another problem with absolute fairness is that we run ourselves ragged trying to prove we love all our children the same.

When we take our four-year-old to storybook hour at the library, we think we must do something of equal value and time for our first grader. Soon we're too tired to give much of anything to either of them.

### Practical suggestions

An excellent book detailing the fairness issue is **Raising Brothers and Sisters Without Raising the Roof** by Carole and Andrew Calladine. (Available from Growing Child, order #JHZ67, \$10 including shipping and handling).

The Calladines suggest that parents emphasize each child's individuality. For example:

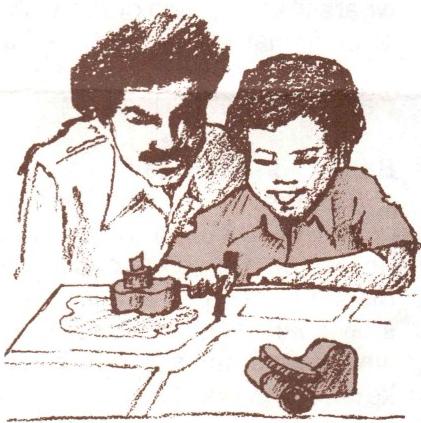
• **Birthdays.** Many parents downplay birthdays out of fear that other siblings will feel jealous and hurt if the birthday child gets too much attention. But this is the birthday child's special day, and he has a right to feel special. This doesn't mean we smother him with gifts. Rather, we individualize the day to suit

him. The other children also know that they will be the special one when their birthday comes around.



• **Treats.** There's nothing like one piece of cake or one popsicle to start a full-scale battle over who got the biggest piece. Since treats don't really fall under the "need" category, parents can solve the "his-piece-is-bigger-than-mine" dilemma by this method: one child divides the item and the other child gets first choice. Both children quickly learn to cut equal pieces.

Another mother we know handles the problem this way: "I just take a bite out of the bigger piece," she says. Sometimes an outrageous or humorous response works far better than seriousness. Another mother offers an alternative treat: two pieces of candy for one popsicle, for instance.



• **Clothes.** Hand-me-downs are common in most families, and for the most part, siblings resent wearing passed-on clothes. If for economic reasons you must use the trickle-down technique, don't make him wear **all** hand-me-downs. Let him pick out two or three items each season in the color and style he likes. Choosing some clothing of his own helps him develop his own tastes, and helps you become acquainted with his likes and dislikes.



• **Relatives.** Each of our children deserve exclusive time with grandparents, aunts, uncles, or other relatives. Likewise, relatives usually enjoy only one child at a time — two or more are exhausting to anyone but a parent. Because we allow our daughter time with grandma, doesn't mean we have to allow our son time with grandpa on the same day. The children's visits can be spaced so the children are special, and relatives get to know and appreciate the children's unique personalities.

**When we make all things equal, we deny our children the right to be who they are.**

• **Sports.** Not all siblings are good at the same activity or sport. A child pressured to participate in a game that is not suited to him just because his brother participated will not be happy.

• **Friends.** Sisters and brothers need their own friends. These friends share among themselves, but they don't necessarily share with brothers and sisters. Don't interfere with your

child's ability to form a friendship outside the family by demanding that another sibling be included in their play or talk. When siblings share the exclusive companionship of a friend, they are usually more willing to enjoy their brothers and sisters during family time.

• **Parents.** It is difficult for children to share their parents. This is the basic reason the fairness issue arises. But when we

respond individually to each child, siblings are more likely to stop keeping score and stop trying to lay a guilt trip on us about who received what when.

Every child should be treated like an only child because there will never be another like him. We'll save our children a good deal of futile anger and resentment if we teach them that life doesn't deal advantages and disadvantages in equal doses.

Jodi Vernon is a freelance writer with a B.A. in psychology. Her work has appeared in other national publications.

## Doldrum day escapes

*There's nothing to do? Nonsense! Try one of these creative activities using scrap materials or things you already have around the house.*

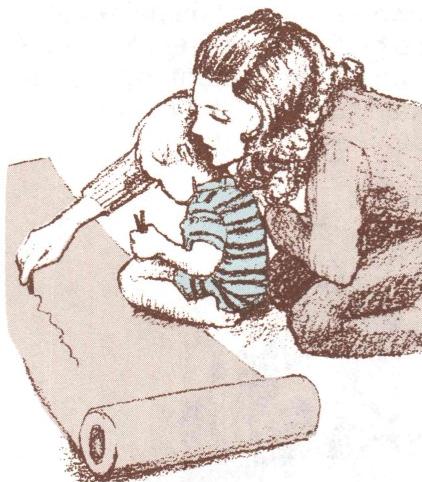
By Nicki Klein Parsons

When a doldrum day strikes and preschoolers need a spark or a distraction, try one of these ideas:

• **Spaghetti sculpture.** Put an old sheet or tablecloth on the floor. Give the child a fistful of uncooked long spaghetti noodles. The spaghetti can be used to make geometric designs and shapes. When the play is over, the noodles can be retrieved and saved for another day. The sheet or tablecloth makes clean up of small pieces easier.

• **Post office.** Save old envelopes and anything that can be used for pretend stamps such as stickers from record and book clubs. Let the child stamp his own envelopes or make sticker trains, sticker animals, or sticker designs.

• **Ghost puppets.** Make ghost puppets from a square scrap of cloth, a handkerchief, or



a paper towel. Crumple a piece of tissue into a small ball for the head. Put it in the middle of the square and tie with a string, yarn, thread or fishing line. Make a face with magic markers, watercolors, or a pen. Make the spook a home from a box or grocery bag with holes cut for doors and windows.

• **Pull toys.** Use dowels and spools from a wooden construction set, small boxes, and string or yarn to make wagons, trains, or other pull-toy vehicles. Poke holes in the sides of the boxes and slip the dowels through for axles. Put the spools on the dowels for wheels, and attach a string to pull it with.

• **Chalk drawing.** A piece of chalk plus a sidewalk, side of a building, concrete porch, flattened cardboard box, or other washable or disposable surface can be a quick way to get a child busy and contented for as long as it takes to cover the area with squiggles and designs.

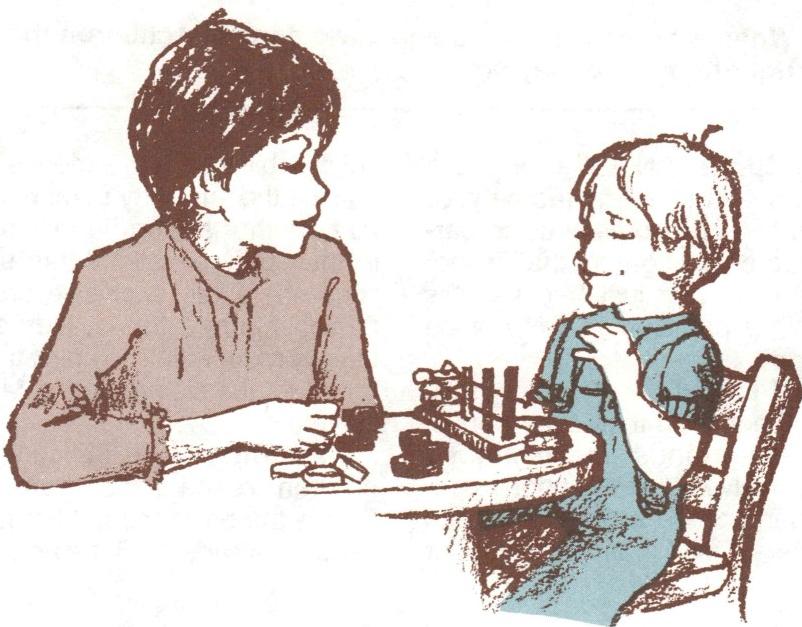
• **Texture book.** Give each child a crayon and eight or ten pieces of scrap paper. Show them how to make imprints of textures by laying the paper over a surface and rubbing with the crayon. Outdoors, suggest tree bark, cement, bike tires. Inside, try linoleum, leaves of a plant, a washcloth. Staple the pages together into a book and use as a recall game later as children tell which imprint came from a particular object.

Continued on next page

• **Crazy creatures.** If there's not a foot of snow outside, send the children out to find pebbles, acorns, pine cones, dried seed pods. Have the child sort them by size and then make crazy creatures out of them using modeling clay or glue. Or make them into "pet rocks" with paints or markers.

• **Art box.** A fishing tackle box with plenty of compartments makes an excellent art box. A personal box for each child encourages development of long attention spans, responsibility, and creativity as the child stores his own crayons, colored chalk, plastic or round-tip scissors, watercolor set, paper, marking pens, tape, colored pencils, and glue. Materials can be added or subtracted according to a child's ability to use the equipment properly. A large plastic table-cloth reserved for art projects works well to protect the work area. Creativity can litter a kitchen floor in minutes but is extremely worthwhile.

• **Tents.** A tent made out of a sheet or blanket over a card table or chairs is a sure-fire, guaranteed afternoon's diversion. Children love to hide there, eat snacks, read, play "camping."

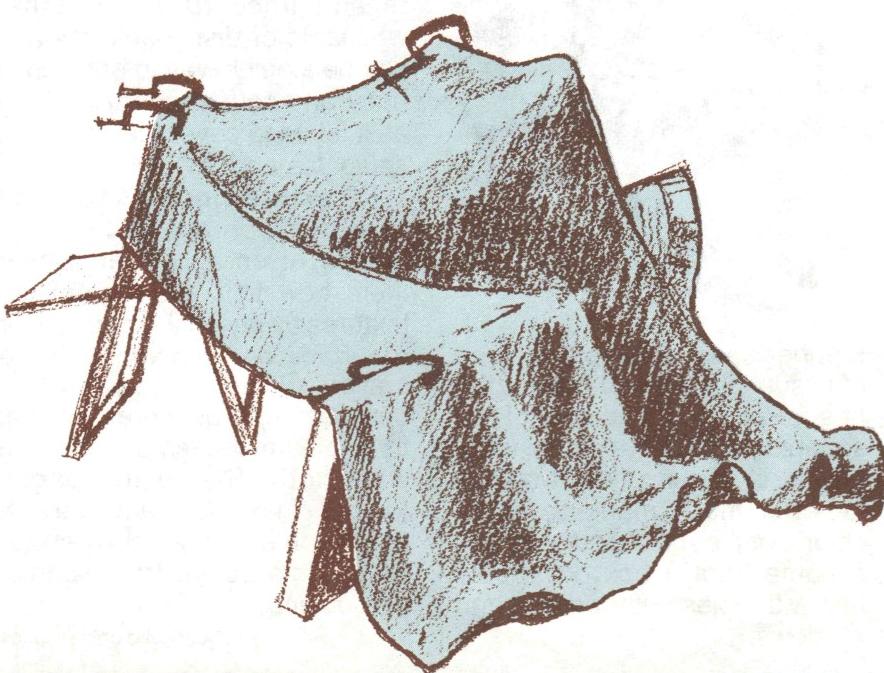


• **Board games.** If parents are willing to supervise while children play with small parts, most homes have games usually reserved for older children or adults that will fascinate a younger child out of rainy day boredom. Playing the games by the rules is not important for the preschooler as he can invent his own play with the game pieces or be guided by a parent to use the games for matching, picture identification, and number and alphabet games. For instance,

Battleship provides pegboards. A child with an interest in numbers or the alphabet might want to place a peg next to the numbers or letters called out by a parent. Monopoly can be used for number or color matching. Scrabble and Boggle pieces become building blocks in small hands.

When playing games with multiple or small parts, pick-up time will be easier if children play on a large plain-colored sheet or blanket. To keep small parts away from very young children, put the older children in a playpen with mesh sides or a large box which prevents a younger child from climbing inside and prevents the pieces from being scattered all over the house.

• **Hide and seek.** Instead of hiding people, try hiding objects, such as pencils or spoons. Seekers stay in one room while the hider secrets ten like objects in another room. The person who finds the most gets to hide the objects the next time.



Nicki Klein Parsons is qualified as a medical and psychiatric nurse, and preschool and special education teacher. She has written for numerous national publications, and has three preschool-age sons.

# Growing Dear Child



Readers write  
to Growing Child

## Letterbox

At 3 years 3 months, our son is only 36 inches tall. There is nothing physically wrong with him — my husband and I are both short so we know he'll be short, too. The problem is that I get upset and defensive whenever someone comments, "Oh, he's so little!" Does anyone have advice on what I can say now, and how I can help him handle teasing in the future?

Joy Takemoto

### Accident prompts safety warning

Recently I backed our car into our son while he was riding his "Big Wheel/Hot Cycle" in the driveway. Fortunately, he was not injured.

After much prayer and thought, I decided to attach a flag to his cycle. The long fiberglass rods with orange flags on the end are available in bike and discount stores. They can be attached with screws, they are visible in the rear-view mirrors of most cars, and they cost very little. With one of these flags attached to the cycle, a child stands a much better chance of being seen.

Suzy Sinnott  
Coquille, OR

**Editor's note:** Whenever you give a child a new riding toy, be sure also to give him or her a lesson in traffic safety. This should include specific definition of where he or she is allowed to ride (this will vary depending on your home and neighborhood layout) and where the child is not allowed to ride (the driveway, between and behind parked cars). For practical teaching tips, see the October, 1982 **Growing Parent** article, "Teaching your child traffic safety." (Reprints 50¢.)

This reader's story also highlights one reason standard upright

tricycles are a better choice for youngsters than low-slung riding toys. On a standard tricycle, the child sits up high between the wheels and is better able to see and be seen.

### Soft toys, mobile help keep baby occupied on car trip

I recently took a long automobile trip with my four-month-old daughter. Besides the usual array of small, safe hand toys (cloth book, soft rattle, teething ring), I hung a soft sculpture mobile which she enjoyed watching twirl and swing.

Robyn Coen  
Lawton, OK

### Exercise breaks help carseat behavior

I have learned that for a child, sitting in a carseat is no different than sitting in a grocery cart, a stroller at a shopping mall, or a high chair at a restaurant. A child needs a break to exercise occasionally.

Taking 15 or 20 minutes extra to allow a child to move about helps immensely. The exercise break means whatever outing you're on is longer, but you don't have a screaming toddler who wants "out."

Carol Schield  
Bellflower, IL

### Tips on keeping children happy in carseats

My favorite part of your publication is the letters. There are so many subjects on which I need advice that I feel almost silly giving it, but nevertheless, here are some tips that have worked for us for keeping our children happy in their carseats.

- Make sure Baby/Toddler is physically comfortable before getting into the carseat. That means fed, changed, and comfortably dressed.
- Make sure the seat itself is comfortable. Buy or make a cloth seat cover. Part your car so the sun doesn't heat up the seat's metal parts.
- Make or buy a sunshield to put in the window to protect Baby from bright sunlight.
- Have special age-appropriate toys or books just for the car. Make sure there are no sharp pointy parts or hard heavy parts that could injure a baby in an accident.
- Always carry snacks. Stick to bite-sized dry cereals or other tidbits of non-sticky food. Water will quench thirst and if spilled will dry with no stains or stickiness.

Donna Taylor Chadwick  
Olney, MD

"Dear Growing Child" is a forum for our readers to share their personal thoughts, opinions, comments, and experiences. We welcome your responses to questions that appear periodically. The letters published do not necessarily represent the views of Growing Child.

All letters to the editor will be treated as having been submitted for publication. If you do not want your correspondence published, please specify this in your letter. Names withheld upon request. We reserve the right to edit for publication.

# From the Editor



Nancy  
Kleckner

## Someone is watching you

Several years ago *Growing Parent* published an article titled **Someone Will Be Watching You** which discussed what appeared to be a growing loss of conscience in our society.

We've printed this article several times because we felt the topic was important . . . it still is. Here are some excerpts we believe are especially meaningful:

There is mounting evidence that individuals in all socioeconomic levels are less honest than used to be the case.

For example, notice the newspaper vending machines chained to traffic light posts to keep people from stealing the machines — to say nothing of the paper.

Notice how bicycles have to be chained, not just locked through the spokes, but chained to an immovable object so they don't get carried off.

Notice how drugstores and supermarkets have mirrors and closed circuit cameras, not just to thwart professional thieves, but to discourage average shoppers from shoplifting or sampling the merchandise.

What does such a loss of conscience mean to us as a society, as individuals, as parents?

As parents, our example has quite an impact on the next generation of citizens. Even if your child is an infant, it isn't too early to start thinking about the fact that somebody will soon be watching you, watching to see if your actions square up with the way you tell your children to behave.

### Setting an example

Think about the behavior example for a child when a parent shopping for groceries breaks open a box of cookies, gives a handful to a nagging child, then returns the carton to the shelf.

Think about the example you set when you

go faster than the speed limit and ask the family to watch out for the police.

Think about the example you set when you buckle the children into their car seats, then "forget" to buckle your own belt.

### Stealing is still stealing

Another attitude which is closely related to the question of honesty is the notion that corporations and institutions are fair targets for a "rip-off."

Many individuals would never think of taking something from a person, but think nothing of taking items from businesses or schools or hospitals.

What we fail to realize is that corporations, schools and hospitals are not just faceless enterprises but are really made up of people. There would be no corporation without some real people owning and managing it.

When schools are ripped off, or colleges or universities, it is the people of the community, state or nation who are hurt. The school taxes will have to be raised to cover the theft or vandalism, as will the tuition at the college or university. Every dollar that has to be spent to cover rip-offs is a dollar taken away from education spending.

Just as there is no "free lunch," there is no act of theft or vandalism that doesn't cost each of us in some way — either by direct personal loss, tax dollars, or a moral loss to our society.

Our hope is that all of us, we who are writing as well as you who are reading, will stop to think the next time you/we are tempted to take something or do something that we wouldn't normally do, but we are doing because a corporation or an institution is involved.

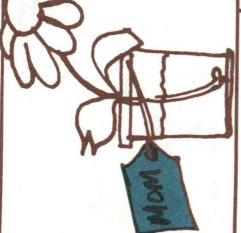
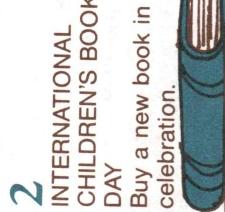
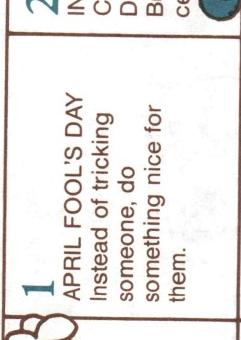
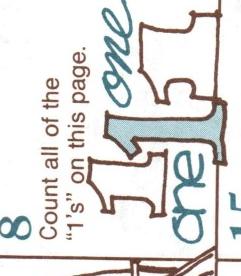
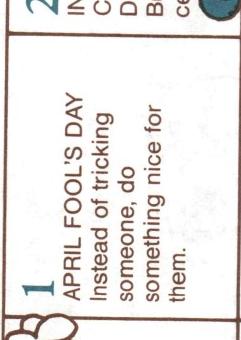
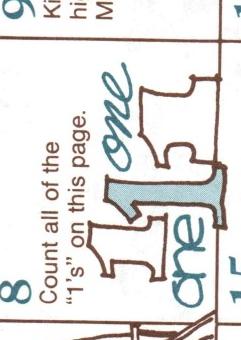
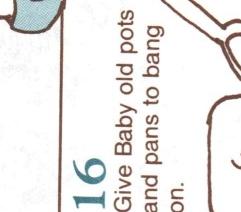
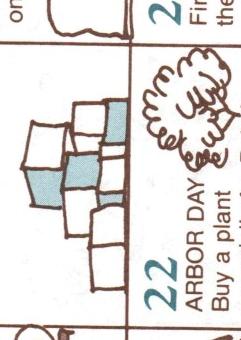
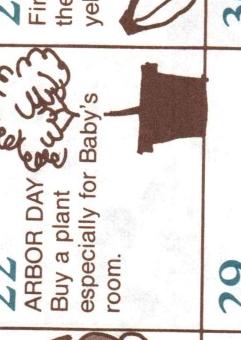
Remember, somebody is probably watching you.

*Nancy Kleckner*

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# Fun things to do in April

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 APRIL FOOL'S DAY Instead of tricking someone, do something nice for them. 	2 INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S BOOK DAY Buy a new book in celebration. 	3 Listen to a soothing record while you rock Baby. 	4 Drink apple juice through a straw. 	5 GOOD FRIDAY Color Easter Eggs. Put Baby's name on one. 	6 PASSOVER Make some Haroset for the seder. 	13 Organize the shelves and drawers in Baby's room. 
7 EASTER Read an Easter story after church. 	8 Count all of the "1's" on this page. 	9 Kick your legs as high as you can. Mom and Dad too! 	10 Ask Baby where his belly button is. 	11 Do you have a record of Baby's fingerprints and a current photo? 	12 Give Baby some old, SAFE bracelets to play with; make sure there are no loose parts. 	19 Go to the library and check out an album. 
14 Supper on paper plates. Yeah! No dishes! 	15 Play with small blocks. 	16 Give Baby old pots and pans to bang on. 	17 Small cheese bites for a snack. 	18 Wear something purple today. 	20 Today's a good day to start an exercise program with Baby. 	27 Go outside in the morning and listen to the birds. 
21 What words can Baby say? 	22 ARBOR DAY Buy a plant especially for Baby's room. 	23 Find four things in the house that are yellow. 	24 Take off shoes. Wiggle toes. Feel each other's toes. 	25 Sing "Little White Duck." 	26 Clap hands above your head, below your knees, behind your back. 	28 Put Baby in a stroller and go for an afternoon walk. 
29 Play peek-a-boo with a scarf. 	30 MAY EVE This is the night the fairies come out to dance. 					

**Growing Child**  
A Division of Darm & Heigl, Inc.

For ages 6-24 months.

# Fun things to do in April

## Home-made backyard playground offers lots of playtime fun

*Using only scrap materials, time, and imagination, you can turn even a small yard into a fun-filled — and safe — play and activity center for your children.*

By Nicki Klein Parsons

When we were expecting our first child we were also looking for our first home. The house we finally chose had an imperfect yard, but that meant possibilities which have allowed us to create a variety of play areas and activities.

While our yard is quite large, the principle of creating a play space with a variety that will keep children happy can be used even in small areas. Most days, the play choices in our yard keep our three preschoolers and their friends contentedly busy with a minimum of adult refereeing. Best of all, the play centers were all made with cast-off and free scrap materials.



Dirt is for digging

### In this issue

<b>Backyard fun</b> .....	Page 1
Dirt, sand, scrap lumber, and rope make a great backyard playground.	
<b>Listen to our listening</b> .....	Page 4
A little understanding can make a big sound in a deaf child's world.	
<b>Back page</b> .....	Page 6
<b>Activity calendar (Birth to two years)</b> .....	Page 7
<b>Activity calendar (Two to six years)</b> .....	Page 8

### Dirt hill remains a favorite spot for all seasons

Our first backyard construction was a cone-shaped dirt hill which rises to about a four-foot summit.

This hill is perfect for rolling balls and small airplane tires scavenged from the airport. Digging in the dirt and mud-pie baking are encouraged here. The hill is an excellent workplace for construction toys like dump trucks.

In the winter the snow-covered hill is just large enough to give small sledders or skiers a slope they can conquer with only a little help. The hilltop is also a favorite spot for brotherly conferences and a vantage point to watch tractors or the trash truck working in the distance. Sometimes it is a place for a pretend camping trip or a reforestation project with droopy dandelions.

### Screened-in porch combines play kitchen, art center, storage

Another major play area is a screened back porch with a kitchen center, benches, tables, and shelves for storing outside toys — all made of scrap wood from a lumber mill.

A salvaged workbench on  
Continued on next page

wheels makes an excellent art project center that can be used on the porch or under a tree on hot days. A rug made from carpet samples squares sewn together gives the children a warm place to sit while constructing castles from odd pieces of scrap lumber. Many of the scrapwood blocks have simple crayon drawings of each boy's favorite things with the matching word written on the opposite side of the block.

For building on a larger scale, there are heavy-duty boot-size boxes which have been stuffed with crumpled newspaper, taped shut with heavy strapping tape, and painted with leftover house-paint. These stuffed boxes can build very tall towers, tunnels, fences, or bridges, and are sturdy enough for small children to use as a roadway or seats on a long train.

On the porch, small toys are stored in large five-gallon plastic buckets with handles which can be obtained from restaurants, painting contractors, or feed depots. Each bucket has a paint or marker picture and name of the kind of toy for which it is home.



**Play kitchen great for rainy day entertainment**

The space under the table provides garages for riding toys: trikes have parking spaces drawn in magic marker on the cement floor.

Old plastic tablecloths and

blankets occupy one shelf, ready to be transformed into tents. Strips of sheets are on the shelf, too, waiting to be bandages or ties for joining cardboard boxes into trains.

## Versatile sandbox converts into shady fort

A long sandbox is another favorite outside play area. The box is located right next to the house, where it receives shade most of the day.

Additional shade (and a fort) can be made by placing the three pieces of plywood that cover the sandbox when not in use in grooves along the sides.

The grooves were made by building the sandbox with a double wall along three sides. The walls are about six inches high and three inches apart, and the space between them holds the

plywood pieces (none of which are over four feet square) upright so they cannot fall or be pushed over.

A low shelf along the other side of the sandbox is a table for sand projects and provides a place underneath to store toys.



**Shady sandbox doubles as fort**

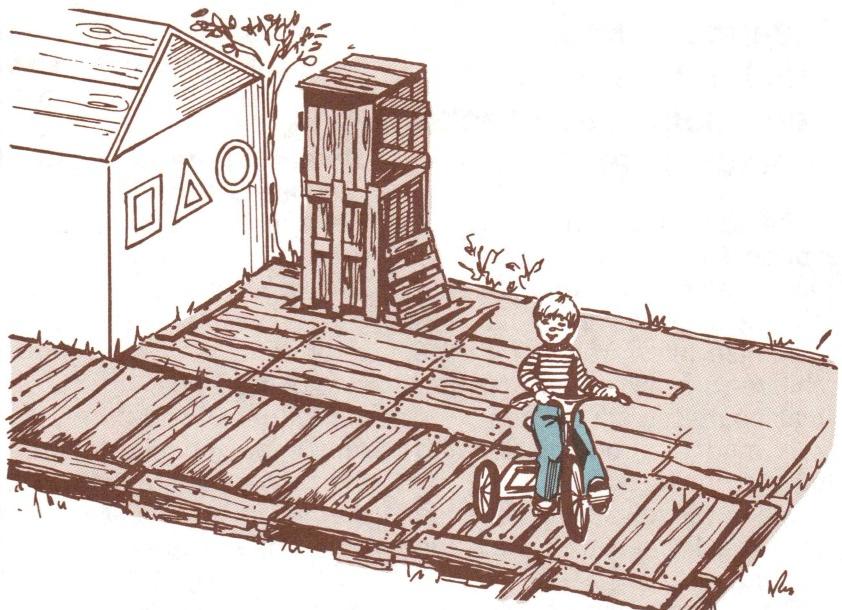
## Wooden boardwalk makes flat, dry, safe area for riding toys

Across the yard from the dirt hill is an open-air, floored riding area made with wooden pallets donated by a paper box company.

We took some of the pallets apart and used the extra slats to fill in the gaps in the other pallets. Placed side by side, the filled-in pallets form a low boardwalk which more than doubled our trike-riding area.

The pallets are connected to one another by slats nailed to the top edges. This also creates a bumper border which prevents riding toys from going over the edge. At the same time, it is not high enough to trip children as they try to get up on the wooden walk.

A shed, a wooden-crate fort with pallet ladder, and a play-



Wooden boardwalk provides safe, dry riding area

house within the deck-like boardwalk provide obstacles for a realistic road that has more turns than an average sidewalk.

This play area is especially welcome on wet or muddy days.

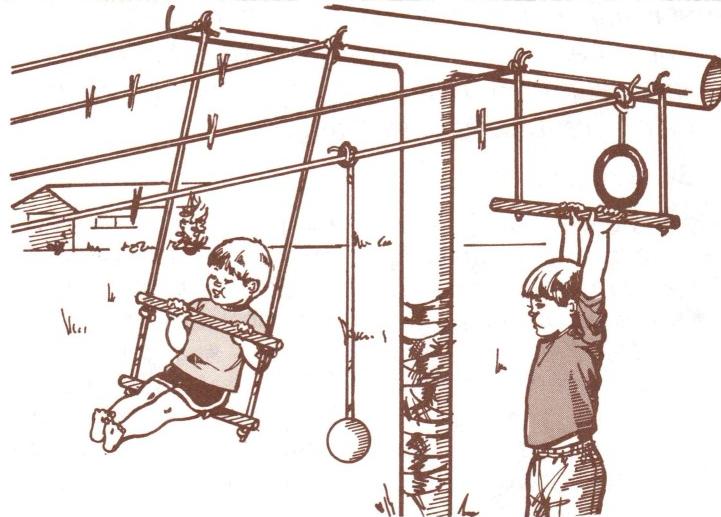
The platforms also provide real work for our older boys who feel very important as they inspect the pallets for loose nails or boards and make repairs with their own small tools.

## Variety of swings provide good rides for kids of all ages

Our children love the variety of swings we made of scrap wood and nylon water ski tow rope and suspended from the sturdy T-bar clothesline supports.

One of the swings is a trapeze, made of an 18-inch-long piece of mop handle with holes drilled in each end for the ropes. While the children are learning to swing we tie a rope or sweater belt to the ropes to make a back support which gives the child better balance and prevents falling out backward.

Another swing is one which even very young children can manage on their own. The swing looks like a two-rung ladder. The rungs are made of broom handles. The lower rung is about nine inches from the ground. The upper rung stays in place at knots about 11 inches above the



Homemade swings accommodate even the youngest

lower rung. A child can learn to hang on to the top bar while putting his feet through the hole formed by the bars to sit on the lower rung. Using his feet while still hanging on to the top bar, the child can walk backwards and glide off into the air all by himself.

There is also a ball hung from the center of one of the clothes-

line wires which can be thrown to another child or thrown and caught by a child playing alone. The ball we use is a soft solid rubber ball which was originally part of a jump-rope toy. A sponge ball or other soft ball that will not hurt if caught by a face would also work.

Continued on next page

## Kid-siderations: The buddy system and equipment checks promote safe play

Besides providing plenty of space to play, our yard and house also offer features that please supervising adults and minimize interference with the children's activities and zest for making messy adventures.

A mud bathroom is located right by the back door.

Many windows, including one over the kitchen sink, face the fenced yard.

The buddy system, plus the physical restraint of the fencing, help our children remember to stay in the yard. The oldest boy is responsible for the next oldest

and at least one friend. The next oldest child makes sure the baby and a friend stay in. When the baby is older he will be in charge of keeping the gate closed to keep the dog in.

We also try to have other children over often and make at least one family trip out of the yard each day to satisfy the curiosity about what's on the other side of the fence.

Frequent child-proofing and equipment checks insure that the play areas are safe. We find that equipment must be considered at many age levels. What is safe for a baby may be very dangerous for an older child as well as the other way around.

Finally, to decrease chances of an accident, we lock all adult toys and tools in a detached

garage.

Our yard has other spaces, such as a grove of trees, that will become interesting to our children as they grow. For now, the variety the yard offers satisfies short attention spans and the active and quiet play needs of the boys. One of the keys to making the yard a fun place to play is having several play or learning centers physically separated from each other. Children like having special spaces — and they don't have to be fancy to be fun.

Nicki Klein Parsons is qualified as a medical and psychiatric nurse, and preschool and special education teacher. She has written for numerous national publications and has three preschool-age sons.

## Listen to our listening

*What is it like to be deaf? A hearing-impaired grandmother talks about the silent world of adults and children who cannot hear . . . and tells a gentle story about different ways of listening.*

By Hannah Merker

The comment I "hear" most often — so often that I can easily read the sentence on the speaker's lips before the entire thought is uttered — is "But you seem to hear me perfectly well . . ."

Without my hearing aids I can barely hear my own voice. With

them I am aware there is a world out there. Many of the murmurings of the earth and its creatures suddenly appear if I flick a switch to "on." And there is still much that is happening that I cannot know unless someone tells me. How must it be for a child with a hearing loss?

### How to communicate with a hearing impaired person

1. Face the light. Speak clearly, naturally. Shouting does not help.
2. Remember that a hearing aid does not restore hearing. It just amplifies sound, quite often imperfectly.
3. Be patient when asked to repeat things.
4. Do not hide your face with your hands or a cigarette.
5. Look directly at the hearing impaired person as you speak.

I think I know, although I was not a child when my hearing left me. Yet it was a child who recognized my world one night, a child who is deaf. Star was cooking dinner, standing on a low bench, leaning against the sink, peeling potatoes. Star loves to cook, though her culinary creations are limited. After all, she is only seven.

Star's mother, my friend, and Star's brother are expected later to share this evening meal with us. Meanwhile we are talking in our special language, a combination of spoken words, graphic gestures and expressions, a dance of finger-hand movements. It was while she was washing the spinach that Star said to me, "Hannah, when I say 'huh,' you know what I mean."

And what does she mean? She means "Could you please talk more slowly? Could you please take your hand away from your mouth when you talk? Could you please look at me when you speak to me?"

But she also means that she gets very tired of saying those things. It's much easier to retreat into her own quiet, private, make-believe world.

### Silence louder than thunder

The sound of silence is louder than thunder. The concern and action of an informed parent can be a vital catalyst needed to give a hearing impaired child the communication skills necessary to transcend his or her quiet world.

Hearing loss must be recognized early. Normal hearing youngsters are attuned to the sounds of their parents' voices, almost from birth. The patterns of sound and speech are familiar to their ears by the time they utter that first magical word. A child born with a hearing impairment, or who loses hearing at a young age, is unaware of the dimension, the depth of expression through sound.

### A parent's crisis

It is an emotional crisis for a parent to confront the fact: my child cannot hear. Often a hearing impaired child may appear not to be listening. Listening is a mental exercise that is learned almost automatically. How can someone listen who does not know there is something to be heard? A hearing impaired child may live with a devoted, loving family, but unless the absence of adequate hearing is recognized early, he will lose, or never acquire, the most basic of communication skills: speech.

The child compensates by withdrawing into a private secret place. Star has chosen the highest shelf in a kitchen cabinet. She climbs up there with a ladder she constructed herself. She doesn't even let Suzanne, the cat, up there. This is her special place. She keeps books and a flashlight on that high shelf, and a pillow. Also a box of cookies,

### What to do if you suspect your child is not hearing everything

1. Act immediately. No child is too young to be tested for hearing loss. Consult your pediatrician, and then an audiologist, who can measure and evaluate the extent of a hearing loss, if it exists.
2. Early diagnosis is imperative if a child is to learn effective speech and communication skills.
3. Learn what the term "hearing loss" means. Most of the time it does not mean a complete loss of hearing. Yet even a small loss can be very isolating, limiting the growth of a child's abilities, if the loss goes undetected.
4. How can you know if a hearing loss is present? Do loud sounds awaken your child? Does your child turn toward voices behind him? Does he respond to requests? Does he listen to people talking? Does your child hear you when you call from another room? Does he answer when first called? Does he want the television or radio turned louder? Does he notice someone knocking at the door, or the telephone ringing? Does your child say sounds correctly? Does he often skip sounds like r, s, th, and l?

and a long knotted rope made of torn towels, in case her brother decides to remove her ladder and leave her stranded.

Star's mother only recently accepted her daughter's deafness, although Star has been deaf since she was two, when she had meningitis. Star's mother kept looking at this tall dark child with the wonderful eyes, with the imagination that chases the hours on rainy days, and kept saying, "How can anything be wrong with her?"

### The storm gathers

Star lets me make the hamburgers for our feast. We set the table together, taking quite a bit of time searching for candles we know are somewhere. The sky has been darkening, but we do not notice.

Lightening has slashed across the bay, but we have been preoccupied with comparing our hearing aids. Thunder surely followed . . . but we cannot hear thunder. We do know when Star's mother and brother arrive because they are shaking us, dripping the raindrops in puddles at our feet.

Star's mother is shouting, "Why didn't you two close the windows? Can't you hear the . . . storm . . . that is . . . of course . . . I mean . . ."

Star and I laugh together. But would we have laughed if we had been alone, if there weren't the two of us there, sharing our strength together against what cannot be understood? Or would our anger have surfaced, and would we have retreated then, into our private worlds?

### Still an adventure

The world is still an adventure, even if you cannot hear the water running. Hearing impaired people learn to listen in many ways. Star and I listen with our eyes, with our skin which feels the cool wet rain, with our connection of understanding to each other, which we wish extended to those around us. We wish the hearing world would listen to our listening.

Hannah Merker, a former librarian and bookstore owner, lives on her houseboat, the good ship Bette Ann, with three cats and Sheena, her hearing guide dog.

# The Back Page

## Dr. Bob

### Parents play vital role in health care

Growing Child talks about teaching your child to "be responsible." This is one of the most important traits a child can develop.

Parents, too, must take responsibility not only for the everyday needs of the child, but also for those special demands when a child is ill or injured.

Your doctor is there to help with this responsibility, but you must do your part by learning the simple basics of child health and safety. Your doctor and his or her staff will be happy to instruct you. There are also many helpful booklets and pamphlets available from the physician's office, public health departments, and such organizations as the American Academy of Pediatrics. We at Growing Child will also be happy to help you find this information — just write and ask for our health publication list.

When your child is ill or injured, contact your physician as soon as possible. Sometimes the problem can be handled by telephone instructions. At other times, the child must be seen in the office.

In either case, listen carefully to the instructions and ask questions about anything that is not clear. Then follow the advice exactly. If the child does not seem to improve, inform the doctor immediately. Your doctor and your child are depending on you to take that responsibility. Don't let them down.

*Robert E. Hannemann, M.D.*

### Warning!

Do not use microwave ovens for heating baby bottles or baby food. The danger of overheating the liquid or food is too great. In addition, steam may form in the container and

cause it to explode. Use the traditional methods for heating — warm water around the container — and double check by tasting the food or sprinkling a few drops of the liquid on your wrist.

### Agency provides answers

As a society we are becoming more concerned about health. Magazines, books and television shows regularly discuss health-related issues, such as nutrition, weight control, exercise, the effects of stress, and avoiding heart disease and cancer. However, if you have a specific question about a health-related topic, you may not know where to turn for a concise answer.

The National Health Information Clearinghouse was created to help people find answers to their health questions. They have an extensive list of groups and organizations that provide health information to the public.

If you call the Clearinghouse with a question, a staff member will determine which of these resources can best provide an answer. You can contact the resource directly or the staff member will forward the inquiry and ask the organization to reply.

The NHIC has also prepared special health finder sheets on the most common subjects of inquiry.

To ask a question or request one of the finder sheets call:

(800) 336-4797 or  
(703) 522-2590 in Virginia

You can also write to the:

National Health Information Clearinghouse  
Post Office Box 1133  
Washington, D.C. 20013

The NHIC does not provide diagnosis, treatment or doctor referrals.

# Fun things to do in May

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>Growing Child</b> <small>A Division of Dunn &amp; Hergott, Inc.</small> For ages 6-24 months.						
<b>1</b> <b>MAY DAY</b> Take Baby outside and pick fresh flowers. Let Baby smell the flowers. 	<b>2</b> Learn a new fingerplay. "The Eensie Weensie Spider..." 	<b>3</b> <b>SUN DAY</b> Sit outside and enjoy the sun. 	<b>4</b> Look at a book together and point out the names of colors. 	<b>5</b> Read <i>Mother Goose</i> , by Tasha Tudor. 	<b>6</b> Hide a toy in a pocket and let Baby try and find it. 	<b>7</b> Listen to a soothing radio program before bedtime. 
<b>8</b> Count Baby's toes and fingers. 	<b>9</b> Give Baby scraps of material to feel and examine. 	<b>10</b> Talk about what you did today. 	<b>11</b> Go to the library and check out an album. 	<b>12</b> <b>MOTHER'S DAY</b> Take Mom out for lunch. 	<b>13</b> Hugs in the morning—hugs before bed. 	<b>14</b> Tie plastic measuring cups to Baby's high chair to play with. 
<b>15</b> Learn a new nursery rhyme. 	<b>16</b> Fill and spill buttons from a plastic cup. SUPERVISE Baby to prevent swallowed buttons. 	<b>17</b> Tape record your voice and play the recordings while Baby lies in the crib. 	<b>18</b> Is there a toy library in your town? 	<b>19</b> If Baby is big enough, put her in a carrier and take her for a ride on a bike. 	<b>20</b> <b>Victoria Day in Canada.</b> 	<b>21</b> Play with a shape sorter and name the individual shapes. 
<b>22</b> Play catch with a sponge ball. 	<b>23</b> Give Baby an old pan to bang on. 	<b>24</b> Read books tonight instead of watching TV. 	<b>25</b> Go outside and look for butterflies, grasshoppers, caterpillars. 	<b>26</b> Strawberries for breakfast. 	<b>27</b> Go outside and walk barefoot in a mud puddle. Let Baby feel the mud squish between toes! 	<b>28</b> Do exercises together—stretch to the clouds. 
<b>29</b> Teach Baby to pick up and put away toys. 	<b>30</b> <b>MEMORIAL DAY</b> Have a picnic outside. 	<b>31</b> Go to a neighborhood playground. 				

# Fun things to do in May

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>Growing Child</b> A Division of Darm & Darby Inc. For ages 2-6 years.						
<b>1</b> MAY DAY Pick a basket full of fresh flowers.	<b>2</b> What kind of noise does a duck make? Plant a sunflower outside.	<b>3</b> SUN DAY Plant a sunflower outside.	<b>4</b> Invite a friend over to play hide-and-seek.			
<b>5</b> Read <i>The Runaway Bunny</i> , by Margaret Wise Brown. Talk about the story.	<b>6</b> Talk about sharing and what it means.	<b>7</b> Play with rhythm instruments.	<b>8</b> Make a Mother's Day card to send to Grandma.	<b>9</b> Practice zipping and unzipping.	<b>10</b> Count the numbers on a clock face.	<b>11</b> Fingerpaint with red, yellow, and blue paint. Mix the colors. What happens?
<b>12</b> MOTHER'S DAY "I love my mom because..."	<b>13</b> Sing a song with silly words.	<b>14</b> Lay a thermometer in the window sill; take it out and put it in the freezer. What happens?	<b>15</b> Pretend play: On the farm.	<b>16</b> Name the colors of your shoes.	<b>17</b> Play Bingo with some friends.	<b>18</b> Sit together in a rocking chair before bedtime.
<b>19</b> Take a bubble wand into the bathtub to blow bubbles.	<b>20</b> Victoria Day in Canada.	<b>21</b> Sing "The Teddy Bears' Picnic."	<b>22</b> What is the name of the state you live in?	<b>23</b> What words rhyme with tree?	<b>24</b> Make a tower of ten blocks—count them, knock them down, start again.	<b>25</b> Go outside. Look for butterflies, grasshoppers, caterpillars.
<b>26</b> Day of the Indy 500. Look for a picture of a race car in a magazine or a newspaper.	<b>27</b> Go outside and walk barefoot in a mud puddle. Feel the mud squish between your toes!	<b>28</b> Look for things in the kitchen that are big and little.	<b>29</b> Frozen yogurt for a snack.	<b>30</b> MEMORIAL DAY. Have a picnic outside.	<b>31</b> Go to a neighborhood playground.	<b>32</b> Go outside. Look for butterflies, grasshoppers, caterpillars.

# Growing Parent®

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## "Please don't rush me" Ways wise parents can ease growing up pressures

*How important is early achievement? Pressure to be "first" or "best" may actually do children more harm than good.*

By Evelyn Felker

Two weeks ago I sat on my front porch holding a neighbor's lovely eight-month-old daughter. We talked about her experience with a nationally advertised early learning program she had recently bought and begun with her little girl. She repeatedly voiced the conviction that she had to start tutoring her child now because public schools could no longer be counted on to prepare children for adulthood. She is intensely committed to teaching her baby to read as soon as possible. My mind kept asking the question: "What's the hurry?"

Early childhood is a time for enjoyment for both parent and child. More than at any other period, the child's own inner clocks determine growth and development as parents provide physical needs in a warm, accepting environment.

However, my neighbor is not alone in feeling a great pressure to hurry her child into more grown-up behaviors. Soon her child will feel that pressure too, and perhaps some of the delight of the child and parent in each other will be gone.

Where does this pressure to "hurry up and grow up" come from?

• **Societal messages.** Children often hear comments like:

"Isn't she mature for her age?"

"How fast you are growing. Soon you will be as tall as your Dad."

"You handled that in a very grown-up way."

These statements are intended as compliments and encouragement. But the hidden message is: "You will have my approval if you look and act like an adult."



• **Academics.** It is very fashionable now to have children learn to read, write, sing, dance, draw, or play musical instruments in the preschool years.

Parents who do not check carefully may find that the center they take their child to for play experiences is actually promoting a highly-structured program geared to moving children academically as far and as fast as possible. (A more detailed description of the pros and cons of early academics can be found in *Growing Parent*, February 1984.)

• **Television.** Most preschoolers are also exposed to the influence of the mass media, especially television. What is the message of the programs children watch?

News shows often display graphic pain and violence. Children in situation comedies often act, talk, and dress like miniature adults.

(Continued on next page)

### In this issue

Please don't rush me .....	Page 1
A look at the other side of the "super baby" story	
Love 'em — But leave 'em at home .....	Page 4
Should children be seen — or heard — in public places?	
From the editor .....	Page 6
None of us are perfect parents — but our children will probably turn out fine anyway!	
Activity calendar (Birth to two years) .....	Page 7
Activity calendar (Two to six years) .....	Page 8

## Emotional, mental, and physical development proceed at a pace that is right for each individual child.

• **Advertising.** Advertising contributes to a parent's difficulty in sticking to his or her own notions of what is age-appropriate for children.

The fashion industry, for instance, has created a children's wardrobe that is basically a copy of adult styles. The child wearing these clothes had better hurry up and grow up fast, because incomplete toilet training, messy eating habits, or sloppy mud-pie making can spoil expensive jeans in a hurry.

• **Family structure.** The changing American family also sometimes poses a threat to the pace of childhood. In two-career or single-parent homes, children may be asked to substitute for absent spouses. They are often asked to share decision-making, provide companionship, and shoulder responsibility for younger children while still quite young themselves.

Child psychologists say it is probably not the **amount** of work involved in these situations that is stressful, but the need to feel and react like an adult to adult responsibilities and emotions.

### Too much pressure?

These are some indications that a child may be under too much pressure to grow up.

• **Changes in behavior.** Even very young children have ways of letting you know they are not comfortable in a situation. Watch for ways the child has changed, especially following the introduction of some new activity in his or her life.

For example, you may notice general restlessness, irritability, or balkiness. The child who has been fairly easy to correct may ignore gentle reminders and continue doing a behavior you

want stopped.

A child who ordinarily puts his toys away and starts to get ready for bed when you ask will resist his bedtime even when he is obviously tired. Or he may seem to be tired of all his toys and jump from one activity to another in an aimless way.

I had a three-year-old who showed this kind of behavior for several weeks following her entrance into a highly-structured nursery school. Apparently she had all the bossing and pushing she could stand during those hours at school. Additional demands at home made her feel she had no freedom left. While she loved nursery school and needed some structured activity, she enjoyed both home and school more when we cut down on the number of days she went to school.



• **Aggression.** Pressures to grow up can lead to aggression. Demands on the child are met with anger, fighting, destructiveness or noisy temper tantrums.

Reacting with anger is quite common in families where a new baby is expected. Because the mother anticipates that she will not have time for two babies, she may decide to move the older child out of the crib, make a serious effort to get toilet training finished up, and start expecting the child to take more responsibility for picking up toys or self-help in dressing.

All of these may be quite reasonable demands and well within the child's ability. If they all come at the same time, however, they may increase a certain uneasiness in the child's mind about being displaced by the new baby, and the child may become quite angry and hard to handle. Since he probably knows it is unwise to lash out at mother and dad, the anger may be directed at sisters, brothers, or playmates.

• **Passiveness.** Another kind of behavior that may indicate a child who is feeling rushed is passiveness. A parent may find that a child who formerly enjoyed looking at books will no longer focus her attention on the page.

Children who do not feel ready to join group play often stand on the sidelines doing nothing at all. The more they are pushed to join in, the more adamantly they withdraw.

Sometimes children react to demands to grow up with vague stomach aches or other aches and pains. In some cases, actual frequent pain and illness result when the child is forced into situations where she cannot cope.

All children engage in some or all of these behaviors at one time or another. They do not necessarily mean your child feels hurried or pushed. But if they are frequent, persistent, and out of character, it is well to consider whether the child is feeling pressure to "hurry up and grow up."

(Continued on next page)



### What to do

These are some things parents can do about "hurry up and grow up" pressures.

• **Watch for signs of readiness.** Emotional, mental, and physical development normally proceed at a pace that is right for each individual child.

It is possible to teach a child to read at an early age and to teach physical skills faster than they would develop on the sandlot. But sometimes the energy and time spent moving ahead in one area robs the child of necessary development in another area. Parents need to be alert to their child's own development and hold back or move ahead in accordance with the child's needs.

For example, few children used to learn to read in kindergarten. Then some schools adopted early reading programs and parents participated because they feared their children would be left behind by first grade.

Now many preschool programs are advertising math and language skills instruction to give the child a headstart in kindergarten. But many early childhood educators recommend that parents resist social pressure to put preschoolers in competitive

learning situations, where mental and physical skills are taught on the teacher's timetable, not on the child's, because studies show that this kind of early training really does not make very much difference in future performance.

• **Stress.** Watch the total amount of stress in the child's life.

Some children may benefit from being pushed just a little harder than they feel inclined to move. Others may enjoy the challenge of working at the upper limits of their capabilities. But no child should have to work at this level all the time.

In addition, when other sources of stress are present, it is especially important to let the child find his own pace in growing up. If a child has just lost a parent through death or divorce, has been through a serious illness, is getting used to a new babysitting situation, or is having other difficulties in his life, he may need some extra opportunities to retreat and not be shamed for "babyishness."

• **Balance the pressure.** Even preschoolers will feel pressure from outside the home.

We can be sure that the way we treat our children at home helps balance what they find out-

Even very young children have ways of letting you know they are not comfortable in a situation.

side, and sometimes we can directly intervene to change outside pressure.

For instance, find a new day care center if the one you have does not respect your wishes for your child's development. Talk to the older children who belittle your child. Turn off the television shows that project a false set of values and let the station and advertisers know you have taken that step.

Don't add to the stress load unnecessarily at home, either. Many things we get concerned about will be learned easily and gladly as the child's own nature pushes him to achieve mastery. Children can sense acceptance of the way they are, and that gives them courage to continue to try new skills and manage greater challenges.

• **Learn to discuss growing up pressures.** Let your child talk to you about his feelings in this area. Explain his behavior to him when necessary and let him know you care how he is feeling. The whole family can be involved in noticing sources of hurry-up pressure and planning ways to avoid or combat the problem.

Childhood is short and precious. A good childhood is the best possible preparation for adulthood. Every child sometimes wants to say, "Don't rush me, please." When we can, let's answer, "There's no hurry."

#### Additional references

- Ames, Louise Bates and Joan Ames Chase. *Don't Push Your Preschooler*. Harper & Row, 1974.  
Elkind, David. *The Hurried Child: Growing Up Too Fast Too Soon*. Addison-Wesley, 1981.

Evelyn Felker is a parent educator, mother and foster mother, and frequent contributor to *Growing Parent*.

# Love 'em...but leave 'em at home

The debate over whether children should be included in adult activities or taken to public places continues. . . .

By Paula A. Patton

"She's never been left with a babysitter!" boasts a proud mother about her three-year-old daughter. "Kelly goes everywhere with us, and we all get along just fine."

Somehow, it sounds too good to be true. Kelly must be an exceptionally mature, patient preschooler. Or perhaps her parents never go any place a child might find boring and austere.

But it could be that although Kelly's parents think her constant companionship is fine, Kelly (and the adults who are forced to interact with her) might have a different opinion.

It seems unlikely that a three-year-old would be well-equipped for tagging along in adult social and business circles. Just as important, few adults are prepared to make allowances for the whims and antics of a young child, especially when hosting a social gathering or moderating a business meeting. Simply put, children do not belong everywhere.

## Seen but not heard

Until recently society's standard was "Children should be seen but not heard." This well-worn precept gave parents permission to bring quiet, well-behaved offspring to weddings, dinner parties, and business transactions.

But parents face a different translation of that adage today. A more popular theme seems to be "Children should be neither seen nor heard!" This means guilt and

A close inspection would indicate that ill-behaved children have contributed to the repression of all children.

difficult decisions for parents at every turn.

Some things, like gallery showings and board meetings, are obviously for adults. Some things, like circuses and Disneyland, are especially for children.

But what about weddings, dinner at the club, the symphony? Parents who seek a broad range of experiences for their children may have the impulse to bring them along "just this once." They will find a big difference of opinion about their right to do so.

## Simply put, children do not belong everywhere.

## Different opinions

"It just infuriates me when one of our guests arrives with their kids in tow!" spews one young mother. "We hire a sitter for our own children. But no matter how clear I try to be about children being excluded, someone always seems to show up with a two-year-old. When they do, it's the last invitation they get from us!"

"We simply don't accept invitations where our children are not included," responds a young couple with five-year-old twins and an opposing point of view. "It's rude for invitations to be issued with the pointed exclusion of our children, both of whom are well-mannered, quiet, and intelligent enough to behave properly."

These two comments represent the extremes. However, society also has some strong opinions about the place of children. An early childhood educator says: "When children are

included in every social, business, or personal dealing that parents undertake or when parents avoid adult gatherings so they won't have to leave the kids, no one is very happy. Parents who take their kids everywhere don't understand their children's needs. And they don't realize that occasionally they need to circulate without their little ones along."

That message rings loud and clear all across the country. For example, an art museum reserves evening hours for patrons who want to view the exhibits without the patter of little feet nearby. A church requests that "all children under the age of five be left in the attentive care of church nursery attendants."



## An unwelcome guest

"Why does our society treat my son like an unwelcome guest?" queries one mother.

There are several reasons.

A close inspection would indicate that some ill-mannered or ill-behaved children have contributed to the repression of all children.

(Continued on next page)

Economic factors have an impact as well. "If everyone we invite to dinner brings one child, we have to purchase and prepare six or eight more servings. It costs too much to entertain children," one hostess says.

Another reason is related to the changing demographic characteristics of the United States. Since the late 1970s, surveys have shown that only 40 percent of the adults in the United States have children under 18 in their care.

**Only 40% of the adults in the United States have children under 18 in their care.**

#### Deciding when and where

Perhaps society has adequate reason to bar children, perhaps not. But some parents err on decisions about when to take children along and when to leave them at home.

One of those times is when parents use children as "buffers." At these times, the children become the focus of attention, limiting the interaction between the parents and other adults.

"Buffer" children interrupt conversations, perform, and receive the message that they are cute and adorable from their parents. Other people, however, may find them obnoxious.

"I don't like to hold other people's kids, listen to their cute comments, or watch them do somersaults," declares a mother of four. "I accept invitations to get away from my own brood, and am very offended when the hosts or another guest intrudes on adult socializing by allowing children to take center stage."

Guilt is also a culprit. Parents are often groping for more time for their children, for themselves, and for their friends. Guilt over not having enough time encour-

**Since disruptive behavior is the focus of many complaints about children, realizing their limitations and frustrations is an important first step in making good decisions on their behalf.**



ages them to pack the diaper bag and sleepy toddler as they venture out for a night of pinochle with old friends, and prods them to parade through a wedding reception with uninvited, bewildered kids in tow.

Such time management simply does not work in the best interests of the children, however. Their boredom, confinement, and intense frustration often intrude on an otherwise happy occasion.

#### When to take them?

There are a number of things parents need to consider before including their children in adult gatherings.

- Children seldom enjoy these happenings.
- Parents may be preoccupied with the children at the expense of adult interaction.

- Some segments of society have indicated a clear preference for the exclusion of children from certain events, and this makes it difficult for parents and children to remain at ease in those situations.

#### Drawing the line

How can parents draw the boundaries between activities for adults and those for children?

Dr. Stephen Glenn, author of **Developing Capable Young People**, suggests parents become aware of the individual needs and abilities of their children.

Dr. Glenn believes that children need a number of things: social interaction with peers, family work, family play, and conversation with parents. They do not need formal dinner parties, conversations with mortgage lenders, and long sit-down assemblies in which they have no interest, he says. Since disruptive behavior is the focus of many complaints about children, realizing their limitations and frustrations is an important first step in making good decisions on their behalf.

Thinking over the needs and capabilities of young children and selecting appropriate social activities for them is essential if families want to avoid frustration and discipline problems. Loving them may require leaving them occasionally.

Paula Patton is a ten-year veteran of high school teaching in the areas of Education for Parenthood and Family Life Education. She is a mother of two and author of numerous articles on parenting and child development published in national magazines and journals.

# From the Editor



Nancy  
Kleckner

## Practice (possibly) makes perfect

This month, the Good Lord willin' and the creek don't rise, my son will graduate from college. This is quite a landmark for both of us (and for Bob's physics professor, I'm sure).

For Bob, it's the end of college years and the beginning (we hope) of the 8-to-5 work world.

For me, it's one more adjustment as Bob leaves our home to establish one of his own. It's an exciting time for both of us and it's kind of scary, too. Something like the first day of school.

In thinking about the decisions, challenges and dilemmas Bob is going to face, I find myself once again thinking about the kind of job I've done as a parent.

### Bad things

Are there things I'd like to do over? You bet. One area that comes to mind immediately is money. I'd like another chance at teaching Bob the value of money, how to spend it, how to save it, and especially how to use it and not let it use you.

Another thing I'd do is not worry so much about Bob's choice of friends. There were a couple of youngsters who I thought were all wrong, but I knew better than to make a fuss. So, I tried to give them as much consideration as other friends I did approve of.

A funny thing happened . . . over the years I came to know both of them very well and ended up admitting I was wrong — they were pretty good choices for friends.

### Good things

I did some things right, too. There were times when I thought Bob hadn't been completely honest about a situation, but I allowed him room to think about it. More times

than not he came back to me with a revised version and an admission that he had been less than honest. He learned more in those agonizing half-hours between half-truth and truth than I could have taught him by demanding that he tell me what happened.

Another philosophy I tried to follow was something I heard many years ago from one of our Growing Child writers. She said every kid has to have someone who will always be on his side, someone he can count on. The logical person seems to be a parent. I made sure Bob knew I would be that person for him.

Whatever happened, however bad it was, he knew he could count on me. Kids need to know that for the bad times. It's easy for parents to be happy, loving and accepting during the good times, but it's how you act when things aren't so good that leaves a mark on children.

Even as I weigh "good" and "bad" measurements, I am reassured by the idea that parents do more things right than we think we do. Otherwise our world would be chaos, filled with a majority of rude, unruly, unprincipled adults who were the results of parents' so-called mistakes.

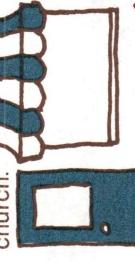
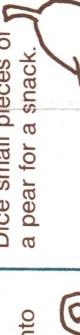
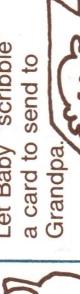
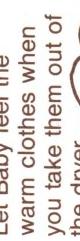
What I'm trying to say is something you've heard from here before: Your children will grow up in spite of you, will weather your best and worst attempts at parenting, and won't be ruined for life.

After all, aren't you aware of some things **your** parents didn't do exactly right? Haven't you made adjustments yourself, forgiven them, swore you'd never do it with your own children, and gone on with life?

So did they.

*Nancy Kleckner*

# Fun things to do in June

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>Growing Child</b> <small>A Division of Dawn &amp; Haiglett, Inc.</small>						
						
<b>1</b> Hang a mobile from the ceiling above Baby's changing table. 	<b>2</b> Go out to eat after church. 	<b>3</b> Find different kinds of flowers to smell and enjoy. 	<b>4</b> Encourage Baby to walk towards you from the other side of the room. 	<b>5</b> Look for things in the kitchen that are blue. 	<b>6</b> Read <i>Here a Chick, There a Chick</i> , by Bruce McMillan. 	<b>7</b> Cats have baby 
<b>8</b> Play in the wading pool today. 	<b>9</b> Invite the neighbors over for iced tea in the afternoon. 	<b>10</b> Sing "Where is Thumbkin?" 	<b>11</b> Take plastic measuring cups into the bathtub. 	<b>12</b> Dice small pieces of a pear for a snack. 	<b>13</b> Let Baby "scribble" a card to send to Grandpa. 	<b>14</b> FLAG DAY. Take Baby outside to see the flag blowing in the wind. 
<b>15</b> Make freezer popsicles from fruit juice. 	<b>16</b> FATHER'S DAY. Bake Dad his favorite pie. Talk about the ingredients that go in it. 	<b>17</b> Let Baby play with lids from plastic bowls. 	<b>18</b> Name the parts of Baby's shoe: Laces, sole... 	<b>19</b> Keep a clean, safe sponge handy for Baby to mouth and feel. 	<b>20</b> Are the cleaning and medicine cabinets locked or out of reach? 	<b>21</b> Let Baby feel the warm clothes when you take them out of the dryer. 
<b>22</b> Put Baby in the stroller and take a walk around the block in the evening. 	<b>23</b> Visit the zoo. 	<b>24</b> Do "stretching exercises" for Baby's muscles. 	<b>25</b> Let Baby watch as you shake vinegar and oil salad dressing. 	<b>26</b> Take a picture of Baby with your pet or a friend's pet. 	<b>27</b> I love you because 	<b>28</b> Eat a red vegetable for dinner. 
<b>29</b> Lie on the floor, sit Baby on your stomach and sing to him. 	<b>30</b> Wear something bright yellow. 					

# Fun things to do in June

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

1 Put a brightly colored poster on the ceiling above Toddler's bed.

2 Go out to eat after church.



3 Do you know the names of some of the flowers in your neighborhood?



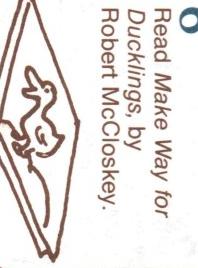
4 Hold hands and climb a staircase together.



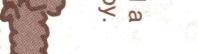
5 Look for things in the kitchen that are blue.



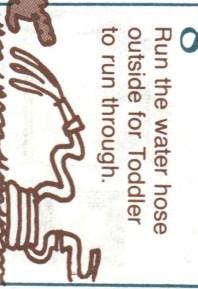
6 Read *Make Way for Ducklings*, by Robert McCloskey.



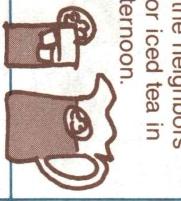
7 A ewe is a mother \_\_\_\_\_ and a \_\_\_\_\_ is her baby.



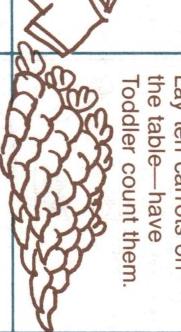
8 Run the water hose outside for Toddler to run through.



9 Invite the neighbors over for iced tea in the afternoon.



10 Wear something yellow. Spell it... say it.



11 Lay ten carrots on the table—have Toddler count them.



12 Toddler gets to pick out his favorite vegetable at the grocery store.



13 Draw a card to send to Grandpa.



14 FLAG DAY Count the number of stars and stripes on the flag.



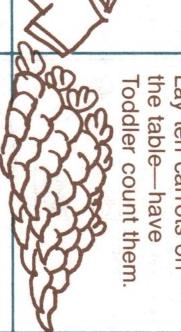
15 Make freezer popsicles from fruit juice.



16 FATHER'S DAY Let Toddler help bake Dad his favorite pie.



17 How many houses are on your block?



18 Look for the uppercase letter "D" on this page.



19 What colors are the walls in the bathroom?



20 Are the cleaning and medicine cabinets locked or out of reach?



21 Let Toddler sort clothes by colors before washing... sort again after drying.



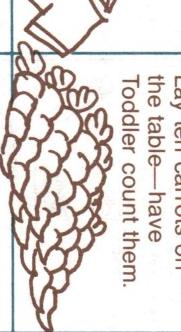
22 Take a walk around the block in the evening.



23 Visit the zoo.



24 Invite a friend over for lunch and to play.



25 Hold Toddler on your lap and sing a song together.



26 Toddler plays with your pet or a friend's pet.



27 I love you because \_\_\_\_\_.



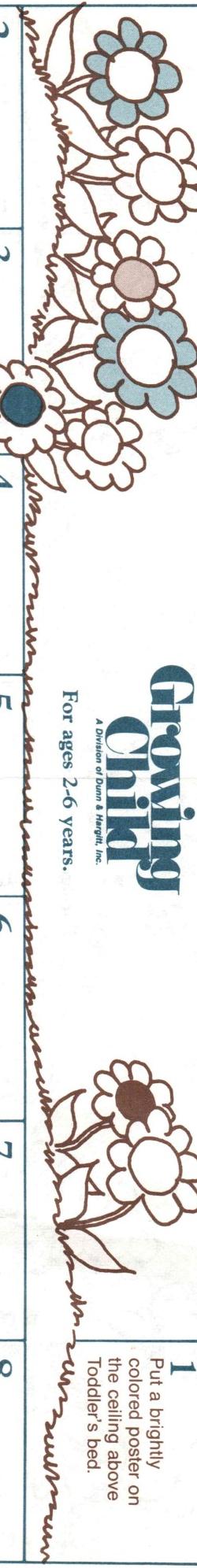
28 Eat a red vegetable for dinner.



29 Give Toddler a piggyback ride.



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# Growing Parent®

June 1985  
Vol. 13 No. 6

## The gift of gab

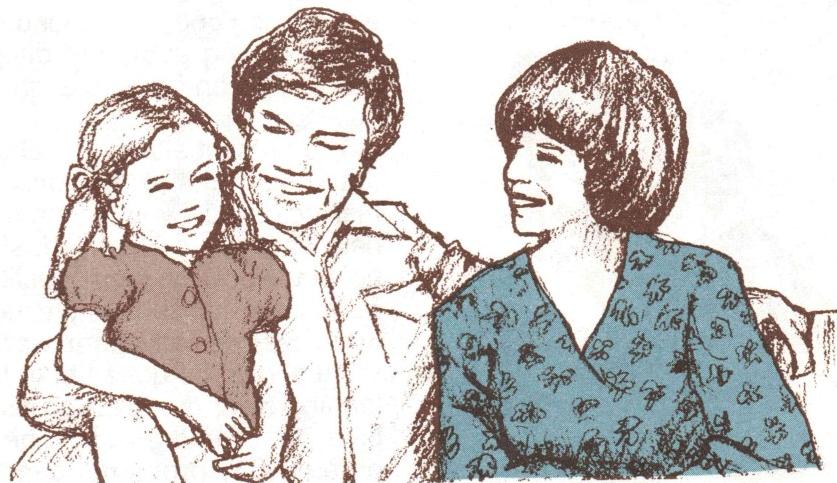
*One key to a rich marriage is communication.*

*Learning how to make interesting conversation is like learning to ride a bike: once you learn how, you'll always know, and the knowledge will always bring you pleasure.*

By Margaret Chaplin Campbell

Several times a month my husband and I go out for dinner. Each time, I am struck by the sobering reality that nobody is talking. Other couples, most long married like ourselves, eat in silence with their faces expressionless.

I suppose one might reason that since they've been married for years, they're talked out. But that has a sound of such finality, like played out, burned out, thrown out. Long ago I resolved



that the silence of boredom would not engulf us. I have watched many flaming romances die into ashes because couples became so involved with jobs, chores, hobbies, acquaintances, or blaring TV that they let the lovely sound of two voices communicating slowly vanish. God gave us vocal cords, and he meant for us to talk; he gave us intelligence so we could find stimulating topics to talk about.

But a stream of conversation cannot be turned on like a water faucet. The other's attention must first be captured. How do you get the attention of your mate when, after years of marriage, you've heard each other's jokes and opinions so many times? Fortunately, there are subjects which always are interesting — things which have touched, are touching, or will touch your lives. This, in essence, is the framework of every meaningful conversation.

Once the attention is captured, the degree of involvement usually depends on an individual's

personal stake in the subject under discussion. Think, for example, how mildly we are affected by news of the rescue of a stranger from a burning building. This mild interest becomes a deep concern if the rescued one is a relative or loved one. How profound would be our emotion should it be our own life that was saved.

Likewise, conversation with one's spouse must be made personal. The daily newspaper provides a wealth of conversational tidbits. When I read of someone who has had a comical, unusual, or disturbing experience, I tell my husband about it. Then I ask, "Did anything like that ever happen to you?" Whack! I have his attention.

When an intriguing problem is presented in the "Dear Abby" column, I ask, "What answer would you give this person?" Often, his solution is better than the one given, and he is pleased when I tell him that.

But today's news is not one's  
(Continued on next page)

### In this issue

The gift of gab .....	Page 1
Spice up your marriage with some good conversation	
Creative family activities .....	Page 3
Fun and togetherness don't have to cost a lot of money.	
Dear Growing Child .....	Page 5
Letters from readers about shortness, abduction, helium balloons and books.	
Back Page .....	Page 6
Activity calendar (Birth to two years) .....	Page 7
Activity calendar (Two to six years) .....	Page 8

only source of fresh material. Right within your partner's past lie unrevealed memories and unexpressed viewpoints. Your mate has been shaped by words you've never heard, by sentences you've never read, and by contact with people you've never known. All are treasures waiting to be shared.



We saw a commercial together that mentioned things that go bump in the night, and I asked my husband, "Were you ever afraid of something in the dark?" I learned of a night when his father was not at home, and something or someone kept scratching at the screen door. In turn, I told him that when I was small, I would tremble in bed every night listening to something tapping behind my high wooden headboard. We sympathized with each other's terror.

And one reminiscence can lead to another. Did you ever get punished for something you didn't do? Did you ever play hooky, get lost, get caught in a blizzard, have an unusual pet, run away from home, or forget your part in a play? What was your first bike like? What was your most embarrassing moment? What was your favorite toy? We like to recall the delights of our childhood, and, in retrospect, even the events which were humiliating acquire a bitter-sweetness as we review them.

The past is an enchanting storybook, its tragedies softened by

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### Couples have a reservoir of conversational tidbits right within their own past, present, and future.

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time. But the present is more difficult to talk about. Mishaps of yesterday may seem amusing, but today's fresh wounds can be painful. Yet there is a learning and healing one can experience in discussing everyday disappointments and personal shortcomings.

The present also offers abundant opportunities for decision making. Should you plant a garden, have the car painted, sign up for the bowling team, get tickets for the concert, buy a new mattress, do volunteer work? What should be done about the leaning tree, the cracked birdbath, the barking dog? These present-day problems can be pushed aside, left unresolved, or they can be solved over a steak and salad.



The present is also a golden opportunity for show and tell. One of the children got an A on her essay. Which vegetable in a salad is most beautiful? What was the most exciting thing that happened today? Pity the couples who stare wordlessly into soup bowls while a sunset flames across the sky outside their window.

And there is no time like the

present for praise. "I like the way your eyes twinkle." "Thanks for letting me know you would be late." "The yard looks great since you mowed it." "I really appreciate all you do." There is no boredom when affirmation abounds.

Interspersed with the past and the present should be a smattering of future. Happy people always have a beckoning plateau looming ahead. If there are no plateaus in your marriage, create them. Plan a trip together, propose a game of miniature golf, attend a festival, a potluck supper, a concert. And what about that dream that lies within each of us — the one thing we would most like to do or be? Maybe it will always be just a dream, but it seems to move a little closer to reality when we share it with an enthusiastic listener.

Learning to plan and maintain an interesting conversation is like learning to ride a bike. It takes time, practice, and dedication. But one day, you'll have the knack. You'll be able to ride that conversational bicycle with ease. You'll gather clippings and surefire conversation starters as industriously as a squirrel gathers nuts.

The key to a rich marriage, as any counselor will surely agree, is good communication. We often overlook the fact that deep-level communicating can only follow on the heels of simple, pleasant small talk. Sharing plans, hopes, dreams, and memories is the beginning.

Margaret Chaplin Campbell is a freelance author and the mother of four. © August, 1984, St. Meinrad Archabbey. Reprinted from **MARRIAGE and Family Living** magazine, St. Meinrad, IN 47577.

# Creative activities are fun for the whole family

*Good family fun doesn't have to cost a lot of money. A little time, thought, and creativity are all you need.*

By Linda Essig

Anything that encourages togetherness helps hold families together. Be creative, and involve every member of your family in planning and sharing activities that will be fun for everyone. Here are some ideas to get you started.

## Fantasies

As her husband and four-year-old son loaded the last of the firewood into the pickup truck, a young mother slipped into the forest and decorated the branch tips of a small tree with marshmallows to look like the picture in her son's favorite book. Later, walking to the picnic spot, the boy discovered the tree. "I knew someday I'd find a real marshmallow tree," he shouted.

## Nature table

In another family, the four- and five-year-olds love to collect things. The parents arrange outings especially for this purpose. They hike to different areas, and each person brings back one item to add to the "Family Nature Table."

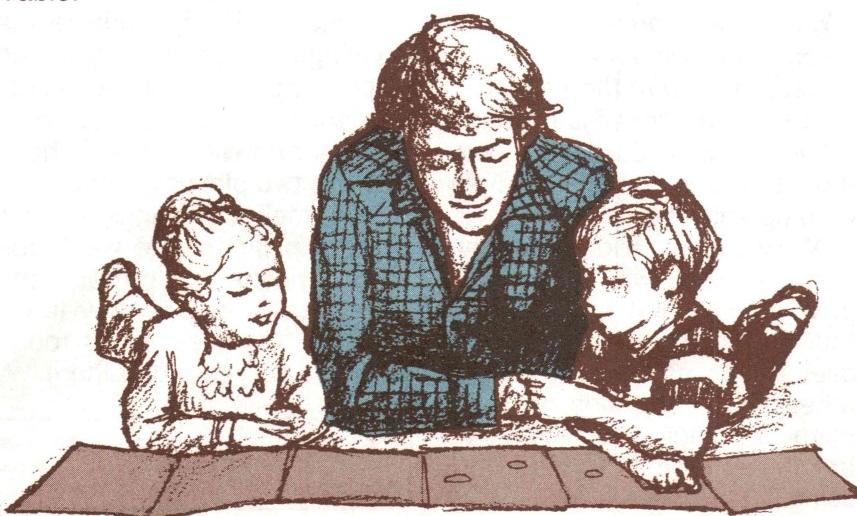
Rocks, butterfly wings, snake skins, fossils, and items of uncertain origin decorate the table. As each treasure is added to the collection, it is identified and discussed.

Sometimes an item can't be identified, and it becomes a family project to ask others for help or to continue to investigate. "The children like to show visitors the table's contents and many times these people get involved in discovering what our 'mystery items' are," the mother says.

## Bathtub fun

"Every time I put my fourteen-month-old daughter into the bathtub she cried and held on to me," one mother said. "Bath time was an ordeal — until I discovered bubbles and colored soap."

"Now I sit and applaud as my daughter makes red soap-circles on her face and tries to line up bubbles on her arms and legs. Her favorite trick is to put a bubble on my nose and then giggle."



## X marks the spot

One couple decided to do something that would not only be fun but also give their children visual guidelines for how far they were allowed to go from home.

The three- and four-year-olds in this family each had a Big Wheel riding toy and rode for hours on the sidewalk circling their block.

Instead of simply telling the children how far they could ride, the parents took the children and two large red crayons and walked the route they had decided to allow. At the end of the distance each child put a large red X on the sidewalk.



"Both children would ride up to the mark they had made and turn around," the parents reported. "It was much better than nagging all the time about not going too far from home."

"Also, they knew they couldn't use the excuse that they had forgotten how far they could ride because the big red X was right there. Usually the mark lasted all summer, but if not, they had a 'touch up' visit. Each spring the X would move a bit further back and the children were impressed to see that they had gained additional freedom."

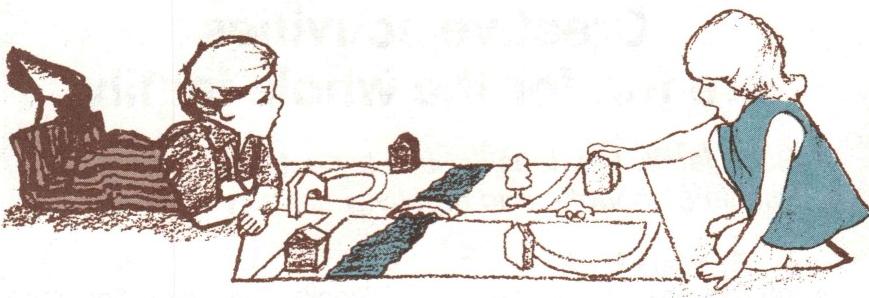
## Hello grandma, hello grandpa

Not everyone is fortunate enough to have grandparents living nearby. One family uses a tape recorder to help solve this problem.

Once a month everyone records for about ten minutes.

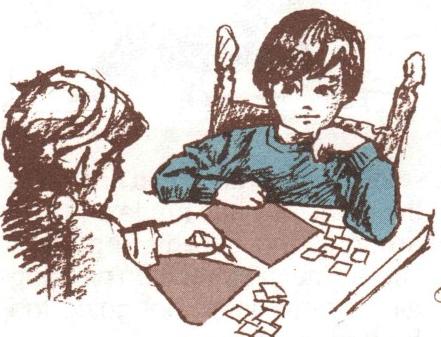
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The receiver of the tape not only gets to know what is going on, but gets to hear the voices of the people they love. "It's great for us, too," the parents said. "We get to know what things are going on in our children's minds — what's important to them."



### Charity starts at home

One couple wants their children to realize how fortunate they are. In an effort to help them think about others, the couple sets aside a small amount of money each month for charity. They have a family meeting to discuss needs they have heard about. Anything can be considered, from a local fire to a national telethon, and they take turns deciding where the money should go.



### Everyone wins tournaments

Although playing games is a common family activity, one couple expanded this pastime into family tournaments.

The father and son both love to play chess, so they play a tournament series of ten games. Before starting each chooses an activity to do together at the end of the tournament, with the winner getting choice.

"Not only do the tournaments encourage more game playing, but there's the added bonus of the activity to look forward to," the mother says. "Since no money is spent on the activity, choices have been picnics, canoeing, or bike hikes."

### Window shade playmats

Instead of throwing out some old roll-up shades found in the basement of a house they'd moved into, one family turned the shades into treasures.

Using magic markers and imagination, each person drew a city for Matchbox car play including streets, trees, airports, and houses. Once play time was over, they could literally "roll up the streets" and put the shades away for another day.

### Celebrating winning

For younger children game playing can also be fun, but because of the frequent tears and sulking of their two- and three-year-olds when either of them lost, one couple was ready to put the games away.

Instead, they tried a new approach.

As soon as the game is over, the family sings a "Winner's song" to the tune of 'Clementine':

"You're the winner,  
You're the winner,  
You're the winner just now.  
Just now you're the winner  
You're the winner just now."

After singing, the losers clap and cheer and sometimes even jump up and down.

"We want our children to know that it is fun to win, and we all strive to win. But participating and learning to be a gracious loser is just as important," the father says. "The kids have so much fun singing and clapping that the emphasis is taken off losing."

### February weiner roast

Most people think of picnics in the summer, but there are non-traditional picnics as well.

In late February, to celebrate the coming of spring, one family builds a fire in the driveway and, bundled in snowsuits, they roast hot dogs and marshmallows. "Roasted marshmallows taste much better when it's cold," the children claim.



### Crayon-shaving art

One mother's three-year-old son loved to color, but hated the crayons once they lost their new points. Periodically, mother and son would sharpen all the crayons, and then sprinkle the shavings in a pattern on waxed paper. The boy would lay a second sheet of waxed paper over the first and with mother's help, iron the two pieces together.

"The melted shavings become colorful pictures that we frame with construction paper," the mother says. "Our son has these pictures displayed in his room, and he's very proud of them."

Linda Essig is a freelance writer and poet living in Spring Valley, Minnesota. She has two sons.

# Growing Dear Child



Readers write  
to Growing Child

## Be matter of fact about being short

To the mother who is worried about her son's shortness and the comments people make about it:

Your son will be very aware of your reactions. Practice saying:

"Oh, do you think so?" or "Yes, my husband and I are short, too."

Treat it like a comment on the weather. Your friend says, "Oh, it's pouring outside" and you reply, "Oh, is it?"

With an even voice you agree with the fact — and go on to the next thing. You let her know, in this way, that being short is no problem for you, and your son will realize the same.

Nancy Gilbert, MS Ed.  
Newark, DE

## Try reasoning in response to comments about size

The first time my son encountered teasing about his size, I responded with reasoning:

"Mom, Timmy says I'm little. Am I?"

"Well, you are smaller than Timmy but you are bigger than Paul. There will always be someone taller than you and there will always be someone smaller as well. This is true for everyone — someone is bigger than Timmy and someone is smaller than Paul."

Later, he asked me if it was OK for girls to be bigger than boys, and I gave him examples of couples (friends and TV characters) who represented different size relationships, such as:

"Auntie Sarah is bigger than Uncle Eddie; Daddy is bigger than

Mommie; Susie and Steve are the same size. People's sizes don't matter. How they care about each other is what matters."

A concerned Mom  
San Rafael, CA

## Example is important for child in carseat

A very important rule about carseats is for parents and any other persons in the vehicle to set an example by wearing their seat belts. Our kids remind us or check us out when we go places.

Gayle Mlcak  
Sealy, TX

## Close call makes mom aware of abduction danger

I recently had a close call with my one year old son. A young man walked over to us in a store and began telling me I had a good looking boy and asking how old he was. So many people ask such questions that it did not strike me as strange until the man started to lift my son out of the cart saying, "Come go for a walk with me."

I politely said "no, no" and sat my son back into the cart. The man again started lifting him out of the cart saying, "Oh, he's smiling. He wants to go with me."

I said a firm NO and jerked my son back into the cart and quickly left that area of the store.

I now put my son in a harness each time we are in a public place.

I did not realize that child abductors are polite and try to appear as nice people to gain your trust.

I used to say "It will never happen to me," but it almost did.

Name withheld  
Pasadena, TX

## Helium in foil balloons can be dangerous to kids

In reference to the item about the entertainment value of foil balloons, I'd like to point out that these balloons are often filled with helium — a dangerous gas.

Recently, a helium balloon exploded in a closed car and almost caused blindness to the passengers in the vicinity of it.

Please, tell your readers helium balloons and children don't mix. No matter how careful you are, it takes only one second for an accident to happen.

Rosa Santiso Alvarez  
Miami, FL

## Used books form child's 'touchable library'

Since she was a few months old, our daughter, Kate, has had books as accessible as toys. To supplement board and fabric books, my husband and I buy used picture books at library book sales. Kate loves to turn the paper pages and when unavoidable damage occurs — pages folded or torn — we are not concerned about loss of an expensive book.

Mary Ellen Hawley  
Chicago, IL

"Dear Growing Child" is a forum for our readers to share their personal thoughts, opinions, comments, and experiences. We welcome your responses to questions that appear periodically. The letters published do not necessarily represent the views of Growing Child.

All letters to the editor will be treated as having been submitted for publication. If you do not want your correspondence published, please specify this in your letter. Names withheld upon request. We reserve the right to edit for publication.

# The Back Page

## Advice on car restraints

"I'm in a hurry!"  
"It's only across town."  
"I don't plan to have an accident."  
"Won't my toddler be restless?"

Infants and toddlers can take a great deal of time from a busy day. Sometimes parents can be tempted to cut corners and make excuses for not using car restraints.

However, more than 1,000 children under the age of five die each year from injuries in highway accidents. Thousands more are injured, many permanently.

The National Safety Council is offering a free booklet called **Childsafe**, explaining why and how you should protect your children with the proper automobile restraints. A **Family Shopping Guide** from the American Academy of Pediatrics is also included. The guide lists specific information on several brands of car carriers, harness restraints and shields.

For your free copies of **Childsafe** and the **Family Shopping Guide to Infant/Child Automobile Restraints**, write to:

National Safety Council  
Public Relations Department  
444 North Michigan Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois 60611

Please enclose a business-size, self-addressed, stamped envelope (first class postage) with your request.

Put off doing the laundry or waxing the floor but always take time to buckle up the children — and yourself.

## Research Briefs

### Siblings of gifted child may be underachievers

New York — When one child in the family is singled out as gifted, and the other children in the family grouped as "not," their behavior may reflect their reaction to the classification, D. Cornell reports in the American Journal of Orthopsychiatry.

The researcher found brothers and sisters of gifted children to be significantly less well-adjusted than other ordinary youngsters.

The study of 32 gifted children and their families showed that siblings tend to be excitable, impatient, and easily frustrated; tense, shy and reserved; and overly casual about social rules. Although some had IQ's as high as the sibling identified as gifted, parents tended to overlook their potential and allowed them to get by with second-rate performance.

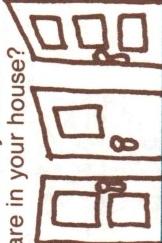
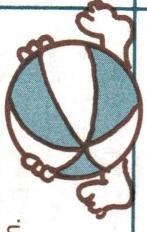
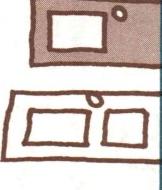
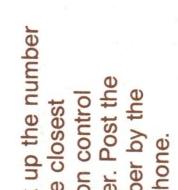
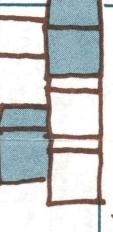
The average IQ score of the children identified as gifted was 135 and their scores on achievement tests were higher than those of 87 percent of their peers. However, they were not particularly well-adjusted.

Relationships can get complicated in families with a gifted child, Cornell discovered. The presence of an exceptionally bright youngster can create tensions between parents, as well as among siblings. In the majority of families in the study, both parents were not in agreement that the child was gifted. The convinced parent was likely to report an especially close rapport with the gifted youngster.

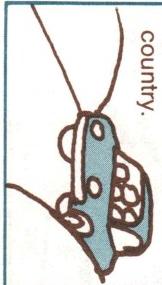
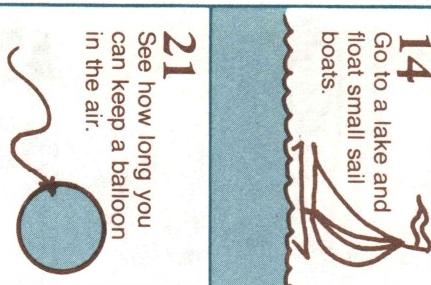
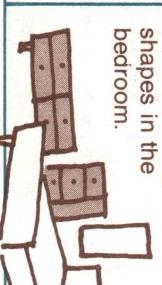
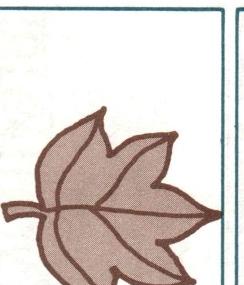
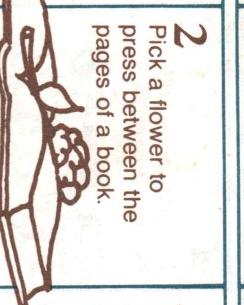
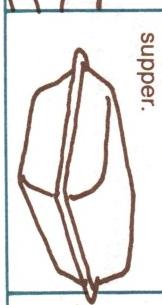
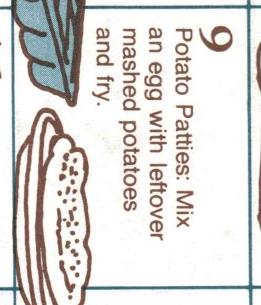
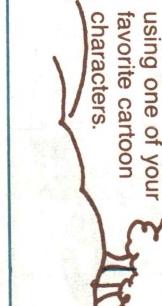
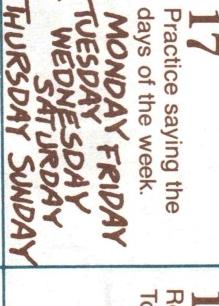
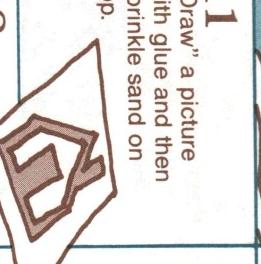
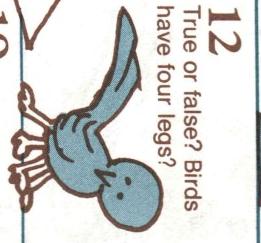
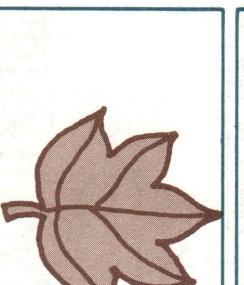
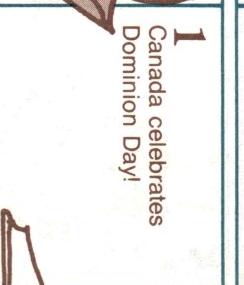
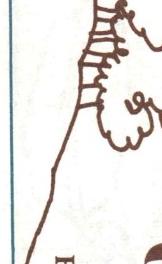
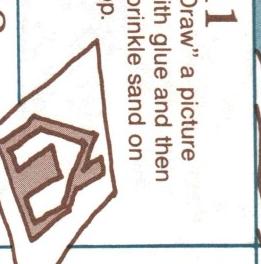
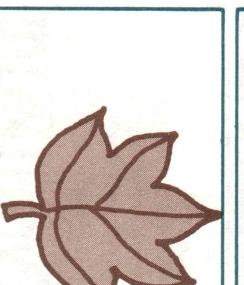
Research Review  
Vol. 2 No. 5  
January, 1984



# Fun things to do in July

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 How many doors are in your house? 	2 Give Baby a big plastic ball to play with. 	3 Massage Baby—from tip to toe, back to front. 	4 Independence Day. Go see a parade! 	5 Eat something yellow—tell Baby what color it is. 	6 Attend a garage sale. What can you find for Baby? For yourself? 	
7 Look up the number of the closest poison control center. Post the number by the telephone. 	8 Sing a lullaby to Baby before bedtime. 	9 Place a safe mirror in a spot where it's at Baby's eye level. 	10 Cut up small pieces of a honeydew melon for a snack. 	11 Gently play, "Goochie, goochee, goo!" 	12 Find some flowers to smell and admire. 	13 Put Baby in a wagon and take a walk around the block. 
14 Invite the neighbors over for cheese and crackers. 	15 Take some brightly colored sponges into the bath. 	16 "Pretend Play" Talking on the telephone to each other. 	17 Stack five small blocks. 	18 Read a poem out loud. 	19 Name Baby's clothes as you dress him—shirt, socks... 	20 Invite Grandma and Grandpa over for dinner. 
21 Tie a balloon to Baby's stroller. 	22 Listen to the birds in the morning and the crickets in the evening. 	23 Get down on the floor and encourage Baby to crawl to you. 	24 Read a book before bedtime. 	25 Play "Eye Winker, Tom Tinker." 	26 Play with a toy that has pieces Baby can manipulate. Make sure pieces are safe. 	27 Sit in the wading pool and play with Baby. 
28 Take a drive in the country. 	29 Find four things in the kitchen that are blue. 	30 Carry-out for supper. 	31 Give Baby plastic links to play with. 			Growing Child A Division of Dawn® Hargitt, Inc. For ages 6-24 months 

# Fun things to do in July

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 <b>28</b> Take a drive in the country.	 <b>21</b> See how long you can keep a balloon in the air.	 <b>14</b> Go to a lake and float small sail boats.	 <b>7</b> Look up the number of the closest poison control center. Post the number by the telephone.	 <b>1</b> Canada celebrates Dominion Day!	 <b>2</b> Pick a flower to press between the pages of a book.	 <b>3</b> Lie on your back and do bicycle exercises.
 <b>29</b> Find 5 rectangular shapes in the bedroom.	 <b>15</b> Take brightly colored sponges into the bathtub.	 <b>8</b> Give Toddler an egg carton to sort out rocks, coins, or buttons. No unsafe pieces.	 <b>9</b> Potato Patties: Mix an egg with leftover mashed potatoes and fry.	 <b>10</b> Have honeydew melon for a snack.	 <b>4</b> The United States celebrates Independence Day!	 <b>5</b> Eat something red for dessert.
 <b>30</b> Carry-out for supper.	 <b>22</b> Listen carefully to the birds in the morning and the crickets in the evening.	 <b>23</b> Ice Cream Cone invented. Celebrate with your favorite flavor.	 <b>17</b> Practice saying the days of the week.	 <b>11</b> "Draw" a picture with glue and then sprinkle sand on top.	 <b>12</b> True or false? Birds have four legs?	 <b>6</b> Beatrix Potter's Birthday. Read Peter Rabbit. Draw a picture of Peter.
 <b>31</b> Make up a story using one of your favorite cartoon characters.	 <b>24</b> Read one of the "Babar" stories.	 <b>25</b> Write the letter C. Name a word that begins with this letter.	 <b>19</b> Jump rope—Mom and Dad too!	 <b>20</b> Anniversary of the first moon walk. Go outside and look at the moon tonight.	 <b>26</b> Pretend Play: At the post office.	 <b>27</b> Play in the wading pool with Toddler.

**Growing Child**

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For ages 2-6 years

# Growing Parent®

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## Banish at-home boredom!

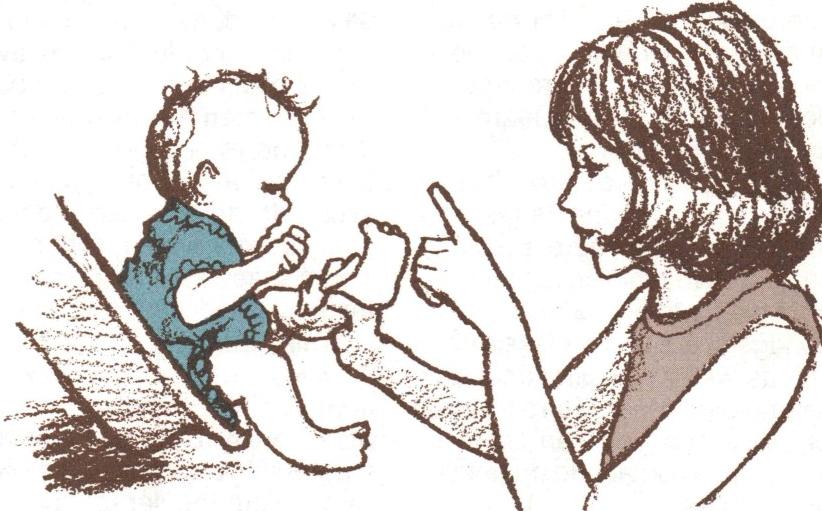
**Need to put a little more 'zip' into your routine? Here's how to make your at-home time more interesting and productive.**

By Brenda Wagoner Phipps

Staying at home after the birth of a child can often turn out to be as hard and stressful as getting — or returning to — a job outside the home.

As a registered nurse with a husband and three children, I've tried it both ways and found staying at home best for me.

But I've experienced boredom at home, especially after five or six weeks of doing almost exactly the same things every day. This article gathers some



**Eighty-nine percent of our female readers worked outside the home before they had their first child.**

**Only half of them, according to a recent reader survey, returned to outside work, although another thirty percent plan to at some time in the future.**

suggestions that can help in preventing at-home boredom. And even if you've gone back to work outside the home, these ideas can help you make the most of your at-home time.

**Keep a positive mental attitude.** Tell yourself everyday that what you are doing with your life is extremely important. Although situations will arise over which you have little control, only you can control your attitude. Don't allow negative thinking to creep in and bog you down.

**Never be without a project.** What your project is depends on who you are and what you like to do. It may be something as simple as a needlepoint sampler. It may be as complicated as heading up the committee to start a library in your community. What-

ever it is, it should be something worthwhile to you, something you look forward to working on.

**Take some time out for yourself every day.** It may be just a half-hour or an hour in the afternoon, but be sure what you do with this time is only what you want to do. If your children are preschoolers, you can plan this time for when they are napping, or after dinner, when your husband can take charge.

A friend of mine spent her time every evening in a hot bubble bath. She surprised everyone at the end of a year with an entire novel she had written in those half-hour sessions.

**Read.** It always amazes me when someone complains of being bored or feeling tied down and then says they don't like to

(Continued on next page)

### In this issue

#### Banish boredom ..... Page 1

All parents — whether they work outside the home or not — can benefit from these tips on making the most of at-home time.

#### Dinner table decorum ..... Page 3

A mother of eight shares her experience in making family dinners as pleasant as possible.

#### Toy libraries provide toys at no cost ..... Page 5

Here's a way to give your child "new" toys without straining the budget.

#### Editor's page ..... Page 6

A look inside the Growing Child organization.

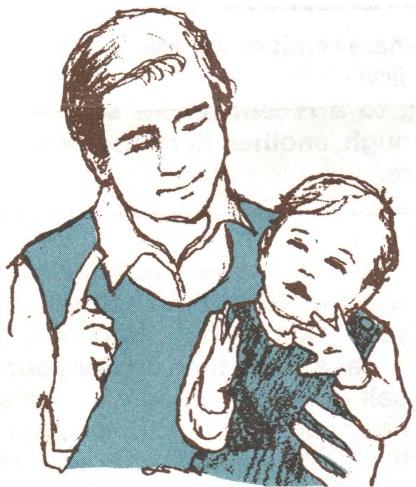
#### Activity Calendar (Birth to two years) ..... Page 7

#### Activity Calendar (Two to Six years) ..... Page 8

read. Reading can take you away and let you experience things in life that you may never have a chance to experience any other way.

There are so many types of reading material available today, it's impossible for a person not to be able to find something they're interested in. Get a library card and use it. Reading can be a means of escape, a sure-cure for boredom, and a way to learn and grow as a person.

While you're at the library, don't pass over the tapes and records section. There are many subjects available on tape today, from poetry to old radio shows to abridged versions of classic novels, as well as inspirational and self-help material. Borrow some of these and you can listen to them while you are doing household chores.



**Pick the task you hate doing most and find another way of doing it.** I detest grocery shopping so I always try to combine it with something I enjoy, such as having lunch with a friend on the way. This takes the edge off the chore and I find myself looking forward to it.

**Keep a journal.** Keeping a journal is an excellent way to record the growth and development of your children, as well as to relieve frustrations and work out problems.

You don't need to write in your

journal every day, or record all the routine things you do. Use it, instead, as a sounding board whenever you feel the need. A journal is something very private, something that is all yours. You don't have to share it with anyone.

**Get some exercise every day.** You don't have to join an expensive health spa or even take a class to do this, although some women find they need the discipline of a regularly scheduled session with other people to stick with an exercise program. Many school systems offer exercise classes as a regular part of their adult education programs.

Walking is a very good exercise you can do on your own: so is yoga. Choose the type of exercise you will enjoy most, but whatever you choose, make it part of your regular routine.

**Eat a well-balanced diet.** Mothers are usually very conscientious about making sure the children have well-balanced meals. But we often neglect our own health by snacking or eating junk food throughout the day, or by eating sparsely or not at all.

Try to eat three well-balanced meals a day. If you are overweight, eating regularly will actually help you be more successful at losing weight.

Eliminate high-calorie, high-sugar or salt foods, which bog you down and make you feel dull.

**Get involved with your children.** Spend some time playing with them every day. Take them on picnics, walks, or outings to the park or zoo. Everything you do with your child creates a memory neither of you will ever forget.

If your children are older, attend their school and sports events. When my nine-year-old son started playing baseball last spring, I didn't know how I was going to get through the season, I thought I hated baseball that much.

Surprisingly, after a couple of games, I really began to enjoy the sport, and now I find myself watching games on television with him.

Time spent with your children is the best investment you can make. You will have added closeness during their formative years and after they are grown because of the interests you have shared. You can be with your child all day long, but if you don't spend any concentrated time with him, it won't mean much. It's the quality, not the quantity, that counts.



**Learn to say no to things you don't want to do.** It is common, after a woman makes the decision not to work outside the home, that she becomes a "yes" person. When the word gets around that she is home all day, she is the first one to be called to serve on committees, to babysit for the children of friends, and to do extra chauffeuring.

Often she finds it difficult to say no because she feels she doesn't have adequate reason not to. Do your share, but don't overcommit to the point that you feel you're running in circles all day. Be assertive enough to say "no" if it's a request you really don't want to agree to.

Brenda Wagoner Phipps is a freelance writer and poet. She lives in Pennsylvania with her husband and three children.

# Dinner's ready — but where are the kids?

*Family dinner hours can range from serene to mildly rambunctious to positively uproarious. Here's how one mother of eight keeps the peace at her table.*

By Corrie Player

"Don't comb the dog with your fork."

"Stop making bows with the noodles."

"Eric's got peas up his nose!"

Mealtimes should be a time for quiet conversation, a time when the whole family enjoys each other. However, when the company includes one or more people under ten years old, mealtime usually means barely controlled chaos.

## The importance of eating

Experts agree that **where** and **how** we eat are as important to physical and mental well-being as **what** we eat.

But while whole volumes have been written about gourmet restaurants and nutrition, little has been said about handling children at the family dinner table.

Some parents avoid the whole issue and serve the children early. I've always thought that a children's dinner hour was a bit cowardly.

In most families, dinner is the one time everyone gathers in one place. With a little preparation and a few rules, dinnertime can be tolerable with young children and enjoyable when they are older.

Much of my information comes from 20 years of eating with my brood of eight children. Most parents don't contend with the sheer numbers I face, but I found we encountered the same problems with two children as we do now with eight. Here are some insights I've gained over the years.

## Does she have to eat like that?

Toddlers may be the exception to my advice against a children's dinner hour. They usually don't have the willpower to wait for a family meal. And most people find toddler-creativity with food difficult to watch, let alone eat with.

So, faint-hearted parents may want to feed anybody under two earlier than the rest of the group. Baby can then be entertained in a jumper-swing or playpen while everyone else eats. If you plan dinner around baby's late afternoon nap, you will be most organized — and lucky.

## Ready, set, go!

I insist that everyone stay in place while the food is served. No milling around or intercepting the choicest peach or the biggest roll.

This rule presupposes that everyone comes to the table washed and ready to eat — an assumption that seldom has basis in reality. When I call the family to dinner, everyone usually disappears. It takes twenty minutes or so to get them all back, and by the time the last child's hands are washed, the first one has to be redone.

I've found a military air helps here — I line everyone up and make them all wash at the kitchen sink. Sending them to the bathroom takes too much time and they tend to get lost enroute.

By the time my children were eight or ten years old, I let them catch and wash a younger sib-

ling. When everyone is washed, they sit down, arms folded. I enforce a strict rule against dishing or eating before I give the signal.

## Dressing up

Formality is often overlooked in our casual society, but it's important. We emphasize a certain standard of dress at our table — no undershirts or bare chests allowed.

If you give thought to setting the table and dressing for it, your example will rub off on your youngsters. Sometimes I'm so tired by mealtime that I'm tempted to put the food on in frying pans and cans rather than transferring it to serving dishes. But whenever I succumb to sloppiness, my family disintegrates to the level of hogs at a trough.

## Accentuate the positive

It's also important to maintain high standards for politeness. We sing a quiet song and/or say a short grace before meals. This calms racing feet and settles squirms. Dad and I then greet each child with a smile and say how happy we are to have everyone at the table.

Young children respond to being reminded frequently that "We love our polite children who are little sunbeams at dinner." You may think such comments are corny, but our kids love them. Keep the tone positive and use the dinner hour to bestow a bit of special attention on each child.

When I single a child out with, "Look at Linda! She's being such a good example to all of us!" she glows with pleasure and tries to make me notice her again in the same way.

On the other hand, if Linda balances green beans on her nose and blows mashed potatoes at her brother, I subtly but firmly straighten her out so she doesn't get any positive reinforcement

(Continued on next page)

for actions I'd rather she not repeat. Either rapping the culprit on the knuckles with a wooden spoon or removing her from the table work well — depending on what she was doing.

### Say something nice

Another tip, also related to maintaining a high standard of behavior, is: Don't allow negative remarks about the food.

A good rule is: If you have a compliment, you may speak, but no screaming at the cook and no derogatory comments allowed. *Ikky, Oh, no!* and ugly faces are considered derogatory comments. On the other hand, if an unfavorable food is served, a child is allowed to say, quietly, "No, thank you."

### Turn down the volume

I find it best to insist that everyone asks to have things passed. I don't allow anyone to get up and wander around the table or crawl under it.

Remind the kids that they must address the person closest to whatever they want passed. Chanting "Please pass the butter!" over and over to no one in particular just adds to the noise level.

All my children went through a stage around two years of age where they would scream if everything at the table was not to their liking. These screams were leftovers from infant days when they communicated by crying. If they didn't get to eat out of a certain cup or dish, if they couldn't feed the dog, if they couldn't perch on Mom's lap and eat out of her plate, they would scream.

The screaming builds — first it's a silent demand, often catered to absent-mindedly while dishes are filled and passed and while conversation flies back and forth across the table.

Soon older children raise their

voices to be heard above the young sibling; the sibling counters by raising his volume. Mom and Dad unconsciously raise theirs. Bedlam breaks out: Mom wonders why her ears ring, and Dad stands up, smacks the table with his fist, and yells, **QUIET!**

Everyone is startled, except the real culprit who continues to yell for jam on his potatoes. At this point, the best solution is to remove the offender to his room. Shut the door, and tell him he can rejoin the family when he can do so in a polite and silent manner.

He will usually scream hysterically and pound the walls. You will be tempted, as I have been, to give in just to quiet him. But if you capitulate, you're in for a repeat performance at the next meal.

Persistent cases may have to be trotted back and forth several times, but if you keep your cool, you eventually win.



### Let's change the subject

Another rule applies when order is established and everyone can hear the conversation. Motivating children to talk is easy: they love the sound of their own voices. They need guidance in what to talk about, however.

Stress that the table is not a good place to recount the gross experiment in biology lab, the school nurse's search for head lice, or Janie's barfing on the rug

during story time.

Set a good example and avoid criticizing or punishing anyone for behavior not directly connected to the task at hand. You can tell Sally to quit licking her plate, but wait until later to growl at Tom for leaving dirty socks on the television set.

### Eating habits

Make sure everyone eats from his or her own plate. A few children delight in annoying their seat partners or believe food on someone else's plate looks better than their own. The solution to this problem is a changed seating arrangement. Certain combinations seem to invite trouble more than others.

### When it's over

Finally, at our house everyone asks to be excused — no drifting away or sliding under the table. I encourage all to stay until most have finished, however. A nice touch is for each person to clear his or her place setting and rinse it at the sink.

If someone insists on leaving early, that child must leave the room and not come back until the rest of the family is excused.

Remember, children follow adult examples. If your attitude is positive and you promote serene behavior, maybe your dinner table will be less like the peas-up-the-nose scene and more like this:

"Great dinner, Mom!" Jeff says as he carries his plate to the kitchen and starts to load the dishwasher.

"Yummy, Mommy!" chimes in little sister as she hurries to help him.

Corrie Player is the mother of eight children ranging in age from four to twenty. Her articles about children and families have appeared in several national magazines. She holds a master's degree in education and English from Stanford University, and teaches writing in public and private schools.

# Toy libraries provide the right toys at no cost

Kids can check out toys at a toy library like they check out books at a book library. Here's how.

By Diane Morris

In 1935, some depression-poor Los Angeles children stole toys from a local dime store.

They were caught and reported to their school principal. The principal's response was to create America's first toy library — in a Los Angeles garage.

Today this program, under the sponsorship of the L.A. County Board of Supervisors, provides toys to thousands of children — 300,000 toy "check-outs" each year.

## Convenience and economy

A toy library is a place where children and parents can check out toys in much the same way people borrow books from a book library. Children quickly outgrow holiday and birthday toys so toy libraries can help parents keep up with a son or daughter's changing needs without straining the budget.

Indeed, toy libraries are often extensions of the local book library. Many also offer a wider range of services: parent counseling, instructional materials about play and toys, and therapeutic play intervention. All, however, emphasize:

- Play and toys as tools for children's development and learning.
- Participation by adults — either parents or professionals or both — in children's play;
- Loans of developmental toys.

## Grassroots efforts

Anyone can start a toy library. They are formed by parents, neighborhoods groups, day care centers, hospitals, facilities for

the handicapped and charitable organizations.

While some toy libraries have become impressive, structured projects serving hundreds of children, most begin as small grassroots efforts in neighborhood homes and schools.

Funding is often a problem for toy libraries and many are staffed by volunteers. Toy manufacturers and distributors can often be found to donate toys. Some toy libraries even act as recycling centers, collecting old toys and refurbishing them with missing parts and minor repairs.



## Toys on the move

Toy libraries are using many approaches to meet the needs of the community they serve. Toymobiles, for example, are becoming increasingly popular.

Oklahoma City's Rainbow Fleet operates several vans filled with developmental playthings and staffed by Montessori-trained personnel.

The vans stop at the city's day care centers and day care homes to deliver toys and instruct personnel in ways toys can help children learn.

## Special needs

In Sacramento, California, the Daisy Toy Library uses a toymobile to deliver developmental toys to special education classrooms. The toymobile of the Cerebral Palsy Adriel and Evelyn Harris Toy Library in Westchester, New York, circulates toys adapted for use by children with cerebral palsy. These "therapeutic" toy libraries are designed to expand the alternatives available to children with special needs.

A toy library program at the University of Nebraska offers one very unique feature: Families in isolated rural areas can order and receive play materials by mail.

## USA Toy Library Association

Every successful movement requires a driving force — enthusiastic people who turn good ideas into effective action. The USA Toy Library Association is such a group.

The Association includes directors of toy libraries, medical doctors, psychologists, educators, and librarians. They all share the belief that play and toys are vital to the very early development and education of children.

The Association publishes a newsletter for members, *Child's Play*, ten times a year. It contains information on the toy library movement, including how to start a toy library, how to raise money, and how to collect an inventory of play materials.

Write:  
The USA Toy Library  
Association  
5940 West Touhy Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois 60648

Diane Morris is a staff writer for *Growing Parent*.

# From the Editor



Nancy  
Kleckner

## A glimpse inside Growing Child reveals that people make the difference

Just as the Growing Child newsletter is one-of-a-kind, the "business" side of our company is unique, too.

There are several reasons that our organization "works" but the number one asset we have at Growing Child is **people**. People answer the telephone, prepare your toy orders, enter your subscriptions, mail your issues. Without people who care about what they do and how they do it, we would be unable to offer the many services we do.

To find and keep good employees, we offer the traditional benefits. But the ones that count aren't really written down.

One of our biggest advantages is that our company is small. This means that we all know each other, and that builds rapport within a company. Employees who know and like their jobs and the people they work with are an asset to any company.

### New employee orientation

One of the best programs we have is designed especially for new employees. It's called rotation and it's a form of orientation that lasts for about two weeks before permanent job assignment.

Here's how it works: Each new employee works in every department of the business for a few days (or sometimes a few hours, depending on the task) before starting the work for which he or she was hired.

This system has several advantages:

1. The new employee learns how the company is put together, how jobs are interrelated and how each piece "fits" into the overall scheme of things.

2. The new employee is then able to see where he or she fits into the puzzle, how his or her job relates to the total picture.

3. The new employee meets virtually everyone who works here, from the boss (Dennis Dunn) to our popular maintenance people (Gary Shoaf and Laura Ball). There are too many names to remember right off, but faces become attached to locations. The newest person feels at home and comfortable with us and the new job.

### Manager re-orientation

This brings me to the purpose of this particular article. Occasionally managers and supervisors go through the orientation process themselves to see if the process is still working and to spot problems that may have developed. And this can be an eye-opening experience!

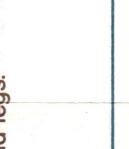
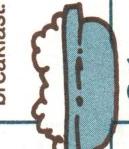
I've spent some of the last six months working in the Customer Service Department.

There are few departments so alive and busy in our operation. Customer Service provides answers to your questions, information about our services, and many times provides the only direct contact we have with our customers. It's here that we learn more about **you**, our readers, than anywhere else.

In the next few columns I'll be talking more about how our Customer Service Department works and about some of the questions our readers ask most frequently, like why issues arrive early, late, or sometimes not at all!

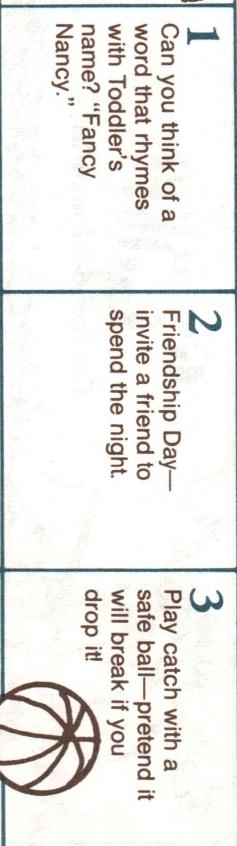
*Nancy Kleckner*

# Fun things to do in August

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<b>Growing Child</b> A Division of Dean & Neppel, Inc. <b>For ages 6-24 months</b>					
<b>4</b> Snap your fingers or clap your hands to a song to help Baby pick up the rhythm.	<b>5</b> Encourage Baby to remove his own socks.	<b>6</b> Name Baby's toys one at a time and ask him to hand them to you. Reward him with lots of praise!	<b>7</b> What words rhyme with "spoon"?	<b>8</b> Give Baby plastic cups to nest and stack.	<b>9</b> Paint a happy face on the ceiling above Baby's bed.	
<b>11</b> Pudding makes a good washable, eatable fingerpaint.	<b>12</b> Point and name objects out the window that are near and far away.	<b>13</b> Show Baby how to wash and dry hands.	<b>14</b> Learn the words to a new lullaby to sing to Baby.	<b>15</b> Make a habit of saying "please" and "thank you" with Baby at the dinner table.	<b>16</b> Do you have any colorful travel books? Look through one with Baby.	
<b>18</b> Go to a farmer's market for some fresh fruits and vegetables for dinner this week.	<b>19</b> Sing "Pop Goes the Weasel."	<b>20</b> Wear bright red today!	<b>21</b> Exercise the muscles in Baby's arms and legs.	<b>22</b> Find the color green in the bedroom.		
<b>25</b> Pick some pretty flowers for a centerpiece—let Baby smell them.	<b>26</b> For every "no" you say to Baby, try and say "yes" at least three times.	<b>27</b> Make up a melody to sing the numbers 1-10.	<b>28</b> Watch a children's public television program with your child.	<b>29</b> As you dress Baby, name his body parts—arm, foot...		
<b>30</b> Go to the library and find some books for each member of the family.	<b>31</b> Take advantage of the nice weather while you can—stay and play outdoors as much as possible.					

# Fun things to do in August

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
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1 Can you think of a word that rhymes with Toddler's name? "Fancy Nancy."	2 Friendship Day—invite a friend to spend the night.	3 Play catch with a safe ball—pretend it will break if you drop it!
4 Ride a tricycle outdoors.	5 Look through a magazine and find three houses.	6 Ask Toddler where the sun is, where the moon is—what's the difference?
7 Name three words that rhyme with chair.	8 In the bathtub, practice pouring water from one container to another.	9 Paint a colorful picture on Toddler's ceiling!
10 Set up a pup tent in the backyard to use as a playhouse.	11 Give Toddler some chalk to write outdoors on the driveway. ALWAYS supervise outdoor play.	12 Put a picture of Toddler's grandparents in his room.
13 Paint a happy face on Toddler's toothbrush—don't get paint near the bristles.	14 Sing "Jimmy Crack Corn."	15 How long can Toddler stand on one foot?
16 Build a tower using eight small blocks.	17 Buy Toddler stickers instead of a candy bar.	18 Read one of the "George and Martha" books.
19 Buy Toddler his own special set of children's scissors for art activities.	20 Pretend play—toddler invites a doll friend over for milk and cookies.	21 Do jumping jacks—put on music to help keep the beat.
22 Look for the color purple outside.	23 Wear something with lots of different colors in it today.	24 Make a "touch" book. Glue scraps of various pieces of material to cardboard "pages."
25 Take Toddler on a nature walk—even if it's in the city.	26 What's another word for "Happy"?	27 Make up a melody to count numbers by tens—10, 20, 30...
28 Let Toddler hang up his clothes.	29 Ask Toddler where his knuckles are.	30 Hold Toddler on your lap and whisper "sweet nothings" into each other's ears!
31 Play on a swing set.		

GLAD

# Growing Parent®

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## Choosing day care: A primer for parents

As more and more mothers go to work outside the home, adequate day care becomes a widespread concern. This issue of *Growing Parent* looks at the advantages and disadvantages of different types of day care, how to evaluate and choose care providers, and how to recognize and prevent abuse in day care situations.

By Lynn Holland

My son was only two months old when I went back to work.

That event catapulted me from the carefree days of childlessness and the dreamy days of new motherhood into the urgent necessity of finding someone to care for my baby during the day.

You don't realize — if you're not a parent — and you forget, if your children are older, the problematical aspects of finding — and keeping — good day care for small children.

### More people, more need

Even though there are many more day care providers these days, there are also many more people needing day care (45 per-

cent of mothers of infants and 60 percent of mothers of children from three to five years old are working outside the home).

Each family is expected to find its own "perfect" solution, among choices that are not perfect. Success, I often think, hinges on luck — luck and money.

### Horror stories

I was worried about finding child care because I had heard many tales of woe from friends and co-workers about babysitters quitting without any notice and about children crying heart-breaking tears when left at a day care home.

I had seen stories on the evening news about sexual and mental abuse at day care centers, and had read "expert" opinions about the damage done to fragile baby egos when Mom was not in attendance all the time.

I was also intimidated by "how-to-choose day care" stories in magazines and books that were full of good, but complicated, questions and suggestions.

### Hope springs eternal

But I was also hopeful because so many working parents have found not only adequate care, but caregivers that became very special — almost family — to them and their children.

As it turned out, my own solution for child care was mostly luck. We bought a new house to accommodate our new baby, and my new next-door neighbor took care of children in her home. She would take care of John.

### Too many doubts

But how could I tell if this was a good solution? I was assailed by doubts.

My neighbor is licensed by the state, and her house is clean and warm.

The rooms where the children stay are carpeted and empty of all but the basic furniture. The price is reasonable and the children seem happy. It certainly is one of the most convenient arrangements I could make, and my neighbor seems like a very nice person.

But is she a good provider just

(Continued on next page)

### In this issue

Choosing daycare: A primer for parents .....	Page 1
Looking at different kinds of daycare .....	Page 2
Daycare choices depend on your needs .....	Page 3
Pros and cons of childcare alternatives .....	Page 3
Locating possibilities and interviewing .....	Page 4
Working Mother survey on childcare .....	Page 4
Issues in daycare .....	Page 5
Parents have responsibilities, too .....	Page 5
Preventing abuse in day care situations .....	Page 6
What the 'experts' say about day care .....	Page 6

because she lives next door and seems nice? How does she treat my son when I'm not there to see?

### Telltale signs

In the following articles, there are hints on what to look for in a day care center or home and how to evaluate day care providers.

As important as any of the physical evidence, however, is something that only you can know about — your own feelings about the situation. I think a parent's intuition is as important as any other factor in rating a day care arrangement.

### Finding reassurances

I found the assurance I felt I needed about my son's day care situation in the midst of one morning's rush.

I had unwrapped John from his blankets and handed him over to Ann. As we stood there talking, another of the children sidled up and laid her head on Ann's arm. Without missing a beat, Ann re-adjusted herself so she could caress the girl's cheek.

That action was very small and unconscious on Ann's part. But it spoke volumes to me: she had enough love for all the children and she gave it freely.

### More reassurance

Another thing that reassured me was John's own reaction. He likes going to Ann's house. He smiles and his eyes light up when he sees Ann and the other children. He fusses if I'm not quick enough about getting him undressed and putting him down. He acts happy to be there.

I still worry about John picking

up a small piece of something and choking, or about the dog biting him, or about another kid hitting him in the eye, or about him getting a cold, or diaper rash, or loneliness, or any of the eight thousand other things mothers worry about. But I also know that those are all things that could happen to him even if I stayed home with him.

I worry about what I'll do if someday Ann stops taking care of children.

But for right now, my intuition tells me that John is well-loved, comfortable, and happy where he is. That makes me comfortable and happy where I am. And when the time comes that I have to find another day care provider, I'll know what to do.

Lynn Holland is Associate Editor of Growing Parent, and the mother of one-year-old John Holland Jenkinson.

## Looking at options: Different kinds of care are available

*In-home babysitter, family day care home, day care center, relative, or latchkey—there's an arrangement to fit your needs and your lifestyle.*

There are five basic kinds of day care: In-home babysitters, family day care homes, day care centers, relatives, and latch-key arrangements.

• **In-home sitters.** With an in-home babysitting arrangement, a sitter lives in your home or comes to your house during the day.

Often an in-home sitter will also take care of some of the housecleaning and cooking. This is a fairly expensive option, and good sitters are often hard to find. Turnover is also high, and transportation may become a problem. However, you don't have to take the child out in bad weather, and you don't have to make special arrangements if he's sick. He has one-on-one

care and attention.

• **Family day care homes.** In family day care homes, a number of children of different ages are taken care of in someone's home, often including the caregiver's children.

The main advantage of this is the homey atmosphere and the family-like feeling of the group. Many states require licensing and inspections of day care homes and provide workshops for family day care providers.

Day care homes are also less expensive than in-home babysitters.

• **Day care centers.** Day care centers often offer structured activity programs and a chance for children to learn to get along with others as well as learn some academic skills.

Centers usually have trained staff members and long daytime hours, but since they accept a large number of children, there is

the disadvantage of considerable exposure to illnesses and a more institutional, school-like atmosphere. Also, many centers will not accept children under two years old.

• **Relatives.** Having a relative take care of your child while you are at work can be the best solution. All the rules and arrangements are up to you. Your child is with someone familiar and loving. On the other hand, disagreements can mar family harmony.

• **Latch-key.** Latch-key children are those left alone while their parents are at work, and unfortunately, there are many of them in this country. The age at which a child can be left alone varies greatly, depending on the child's maturity and the home situation, but it is the view of most professionals that no child should be left alone until he or she demonstrates enough responsibility.

— L.H.

## Childcare alternatives

	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<b>IN-HOME SITTER</b>	No early morning hassles: you don't have to take the child out in bad weather. Illness is less of a problem. Sitter often does housecleaning and cooking, too. Convenient if there is more than one child in the family.	Costly. Family gives up some privacy. Transportation may be a problem. Hidden expenses (food, utilities). Difficult to find good sitters: high turnover.
<b>FAMILY DAY CARE HOMES</b>	Least costly. Stimulation of having other children around. Extended family, one caring adult, homey feeling. May have more flexible hours.	Taking child out in bad weather. You may not be able to take the child when he's sick, and he's exposed to other children's illnesses. If not licensed, you alone are responsible for monitoring and making sure the home is safe and clean. Caregiver may not have any formal training.
<b>DAY CARE CENTERS</b>	Stimulation of other children. Planned activities, program continuity. Trained staff. Open long hours.	No provision for illness; child is exposed to many illnesses. Taking child out of home in bad weather. Non-home, institutional environment. High turnover of staff. May not accept children under two years.
<b>RELATIVES</b>	Someone familiar. May be least expensive. May be in the home.	Family disagreements.
<b>LATCHKEY</b>	No cost. May foster sense of responsibility in mature child.	Child is alone without adult supervision.

### Choosing the right care starts with recognizing your needs

*A few basic questions will get you started on the road to choosing the day care that suits your family.*

Start your search for day care by asking yourself some basic questions about your child's needs:

- How old is she? Many professionals think that infants generally do better with the attention of a single caregiver or in the relaxed atmosphere of a day care home, and that older children benefit from the diversity of a day care center.
- How does she get along with other children?
- Does she get sick often? There will be a lot of contagion

and swapping of germs in a situation where there are more than a few children.

- What kind of routine and discipline is she used to?

#### **Considering your own needs**

Then think about your own needs.

- How flexible are your work hours? Some day care homes will take children at night and on swing-shift hours. Day care centers often have the longest daytime hours. Live-in sitters are most flexible of all.
- How much can you afford to pay? A recent national survey done by **Working Mother** magazine found that parents pay an average of \$53 a week for 40

hours of care for their youngest child. There is a considerable range in cost around that average figure for different kinds of care: the average price for a family day care home is \$46 per week. For a private babysitter, the average is \$103 per week.

- Where is the care located in relation to your home and work?
- What is your philosophy about early childhood atmosphere and experiences? Do you prefer the one-on-one relationship of an in-home sitter or relative, the home-like atmosphere of a family day care home, or the structured environment of a day care center?

— L.H.

# Locating possibilities and interviewing take some time and effort

Hiring a day care provider means you become an employer, with all the freedom and responsibility that entails.

How do you go about finding day care possibilities?

Some cities and counties have referral services or lists of available day care maintained by the department of child welfare, social services, or human resources. Look in the yellow pages of your telephone directory to find possible listings.

You can advertise in the local newspaper, or put notices on bulletin boards in your church, synagogue, or doctor's office. Churches and synagogues may have day care programs, although these are most often for older children.

Word-of-mouth referrals are probably the best source of all. Ask friends, relatives, co-workers, neighbors, members of parenting or play groups for recommendations.

## Interviewing caregivers

Once you have chosen the kind of care you want and have a list of names, you can start interviewing. You may want to visit a family day care home or center as many as three times, and have that many interviews with anyone who will be coming to your home.

Some basic questions to ask:

- What ages do you accept?
- Where are you located?
- What are your days and hours?
- Are you licensed? (This means that the home or center

## Working Mother survey yields interesting findings

**Working Mother** magazine invited readers to respond to a survey about child care in their September, 1984 issue. Here are some of the results:

- Working mothers pay an average of \$53 a week for 40 hours of child care. The national average for day care homes is \$46, while the average for in-home babysitters is \$103.
- Child care, it appears from the responses, is nearly always the **mother's** responsibility.
- In addition, child care is not perceived as a **family expense** like the mortgage and utilities, but as a **mother's expense**, to be taken out of her take-home pay.
- Conversely, the female respondents seldom noted to what extent their salary, after child care, augmented the family income, although this income was presumably used for family expenses like mortgages and utilities.
- For children under three, family day care is decidedly the norm.
- Among threes and fours, group care — nursery school, day care centers, or preschools — begins to take over.
- Although three-quarters of the women report they claimed the tax credit for child care in 1983, the majority of those who didn't claim the credit passed it up because the caretaker was not claiming her income.
- Among those who did claim the tax credit, the average tax savings was \$429, a sum most women who wrote "consider so paltry in relation to their expenses as to amount to a federal insult to working mothers."
- Mothers of two children needing care pay an average of \$70 a week.
- One irony to emerge from the letters is that while very few of the married women mentioned expecting or receiving help on the child care front from their husbands, single mothers imagine such cooperation to be the norm among married women and envy them for it.
- The typical survey respondent was married, between 25 and 34 years old, and working full-time. Two-thirds have a child two years old or younger, and earn an average of \$18,600 a year before taxes. Average family income was \$40,000.

meets certain **minimum** standards set up by the state or community. Licensing requirements vary greatly from state to state and from community to community. Check with your state or local child service agency about regulations in your area.)

### • Do you have references?

When you visit a day care home or center or are interviewing a private babysitter, there are certain things you can look for.

### Observe the provider

Do you feel comfortable with the caregiver? How does she react to your child? How does your child react to her?

Does she have any training in child care or child development? Does she have children of her own?

Ask her how she feels about discipline, toilet training, naps,

nutrition and other subjects that are important to you. Do you feel comfortable with her views?

Is she warm and loving? Does she act interested in the children? Does she answer your questions willingly and helpfully?

What's the ratio of adults to children? Recommendations vary greatly about the optimum number, but general consensus is the fewer children to each adult, the better.

### Observe the environment

Do the other children seem happy, clean, occupied? How many are there? How old are they? How often do they come? How do they respond to your baby?

Is the place safe for children — drugs and poisons locked up, gates on stairways, electrical

(Continued on next page)

## Locating possibilities and interviewing

Continued from preceding page

outlets covered? Is it clean?

Are a variety of toys available and in good repair? Is there space for individual, quiet play as well as active group play?

Is there quiet space for naps and individual cots or beds?

Is the eating area clean and attractive? What kind of food is served?

Is there an outdoor play area that is safe?

Are there enough different activities to keep the kids happy and challenged? Are meals and naps on a fairly regular schedule? Can you visit at any time?

### Checking for references

I blush to admit that I didn't ask my son's day care mother for references. I think I was afraid it would offend her.

Yet months later, when I started to write this article, she told me she had been very surprised that I hadn't asked. "It's important to ask for references and check them," she said. "First impressions can tell you a lot, but references are an extra measure of safety."

Some questions to ask a reference:

- When did this person take

## Day care issues are both practical and ideological

Day care is a Pandora's box of thorny questions. The controversy flourishes because our society has encouraged women to pursue careers, yet still expects them to almost single-handedly raise the next generation.

We will not try to solve these problems here. Indeed, without some basic changes in the way our culture views children, women, and women's work, many of the problems of day care cannot be solved.

We highlight these issues only in the hope that by the time our children have children, changes will have been made that will guarantee adequate and affordable day care to all families who need it.

### Issue: Effects

How does out-of-the-home care affect children and their families? Much more unbiased research is needed before we can begin to measure the effects of other-than-mother care on the happiness and development of young children — and the happiness and development of their mothers.

### Issue: Cost

Day care workers are grossly underpaid. A child development professional with a four-year college degree rarely makes more than \$10,000 a year — and may have little or no chance for advancement, promotion, or raises.

In addition, women in the labor force in this country are paid, on the average, 61 cents on the dollar that men earn. Yet women are most often solely responsible for paying day care costs out of their salaries. Good care often costs more than a woman brings home, so she has to settle for lower quality care. To pay day care workers proportionately with their worth would make the disparity even greater. A particularly difficult issue for single mothers.

### Issue: Quality

How do parents assure themselves of quality care for their children? Should all providers be licensed? By whom? To whose standards?

care of your child? For how long?

- How old were your children during that time? What was she like with them?
- Why did she leave? (Or why did you change?)

- Was she dependable? Neat? Honest? Sober?
  - Do you have any reservations about her?
  - Would you hire her again?
- L.H.

## Parent's responsibilities in day care arrangements

*Parents have responsibilities, too, to make sure day care arrangements go smoothly for all involved.*

A lot of attention is given to the caregiver's responsibilities. But parents have responsibilities in the day care arrangement, too. For instance:

- Be on time in the morning and at night. Call if you're going to be late.

- Provide emergency numbers — your work, spouse's work, doctor, relative.
- Pay on time and in full.
- Let the caregiver know who can pick up your child.
- Provide instructions about medications, special foods, physical limitations. Tell her about situations at home that might make your child temporarily upset or off-schedule.
- Regularly bring items you are supposed to provide.

• Monitor the situation regularly and keep communications open. Talk about problems and concerns when they first appear.

• Take an interest in what happens in the center. Attend parent's nights and conferences. Occasionally offer to help on your day off. Read bulletin boards, newsletter, notes.

• Respect your caregiver and the important job she's doing. Tell her often how much you appreciate her.

— L.H.

# Preventing abuse in care situations

It's frightening to think about child abuse in day care homes or centers.

But although such abuse is probably rare, it is important that parents be aware of the possibility. If your child is being abused, you need to know about it so you can take immediate action.

## Decrease the chances

The best way to decrease the chances of abuse is to observe and ask lots of questions.

Young children do not often lie or make up stories about abuse. In fact, they may even be reluctant to tell you about it because they are afraid of how you will react, because they don't have the vocabulary to tell you about it, or because the abuser has threatened or bribed them to keep it a secret.

A child's behavior can give clues to abuse. Listen and watch.

## Some telltale signs

If you hear strange stories that don't sound quite right, or if your child suddenly doesn't want to go to the center or day care home for reasons he can't or won't explain, talk to other parents to see if their children are experiencing any of the same symptoms.

The following are sometimes signs of abuse, although they may also indicate other problems.

- Sleep disturbances including nightmares, bedwetting, fear of sleeping, and excessive tiredness (from lack of restful sleep).
- Eating problems including loss of appetite and swallowing problems.
- Fear of certain people or

## What the 'experts' say about children in day care

### Growing Child newsletter

"There is no reason at all why day care centers cannot make a serious contribution to the lives of young children. The basic ingredients are a concerned, interested, and educated staff of teachers and aides; good equipment — for movement, fine motor, language, reading, music; and a safe building and yard."

### Burton L. White, Center for Parent Education

"Given the current incomplete state of knowledge about children's needs and substitute care, I firmly believe that most children will get off to a better start in life when they spend the majority of their waking hours being cared for by their parents and other family members."

### "Families and Child Care: Improving the Options" Study by the Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families

"Research findings are mixed and not definitive. (However) high quality care has 'no known adverse effects' and 'may have beneficial effects' on some children."

### Dr. Benjamin Spock

"Both parents have an equal right to a career if they want one, it seems to me, and an equal obligation to share in the care of their child. . . . Because of the strength of the tradition that mothers are meant to give priority to child care, they often feel guilty going to work. This is minimized if the mother's husband and other relatives approve. If the mother has resolved her guilt and doubts, her children will not only accept but be proud of her working."

certain places.

- Excessive masturbation.
- Excessive bathing.
- Abusive play with dolls, drawings, or friends.
- Withdrawal, clinginess, fear of separation.

## What to do if you suspect abuse

The most important thing to remember if you suspect abuse is not to overreact or become hysterical.

A child who has been mistreated needs love, comfort, support, reassurance, and protection — not anger, blame or guilt.

Talk to the child gently and calmly. Don't force a confession, but listen to whatever he tells you. You might take a tip from the professionals and use an anatomically correct doll to talk about the child's experiences. Reassure him that the abuse

was not his fault, and that you still love him.

## Must be reported

In many states, even suspected child abuse must be reported, and it is a felony not to report it. This in itself is very frightening to many people who may not want to make waves, are embarrassed, or don't want to "get involved."

Yet, an abuser who is untreated or unpunished will probably go on to abuse other children, and an abused child who doesn't get help may carry the emotional scars for a lifetime.

Professionals are trained to deal with children, their families, and abusers. It can be a great relief to have that help and understanding. It is important to call a family service or social service agency, crisis center, abuse hotline, or the local police. — L.H.

# Fun things to do in September

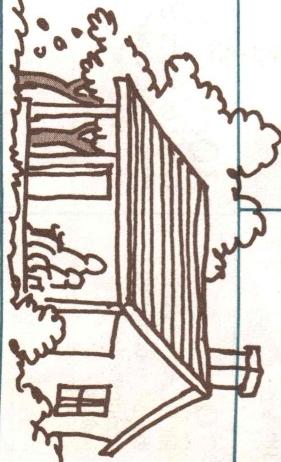
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Tie some safe toys to Baby's car seat to keep him occupied in the car.	2 Labor Day. Enjoy a picnic outdoors while the weather's still nice.	3 Give Baby a knee ride.	4 Put sunglasses on Baby and take his picture.	5 Look through a book on animals. Point to and tell Baby their respective names.	6 Learn the words and music to a new song.	7 Ask Baby to point to a specific object you name.
8 Put Baby in a little wagon and take a walk around the block.	9 Where are Baby's knees?	10 Carry out for dinner—No food to fix or dishes to wash!	11 Sit on the floor and roll a ball back and forth to each other.	12 Practice clapping hands to the beat of a song.	13 Wear bright orange today.	14 Give Baby a small plush toy that he can easily hold.
15 Read Baby a poem before bedtime.	16 Rosh Hashanah	17 Make a tunnel out of a large cardboard box for Baby to crawl through.	18 What words rhyme with pie?	19 Mickey Mouse's Birthday!	20 Find three triangle shapes in the house.	21 Cut up a hard-boiled egg for a snack.
22 Take Baby to church to help him get accustomed to new and different situations and people.	23 Practice saying Baby's whole name.	24 Save the daily newspaper every year on your child's birthday—give to him when he's older.	25 Yom Kippur Look through family photos—point to and name familiar people.	26 Play peek-a-boo with a wash cloth in the bathtub.	27 Place some toys of various shapes on the floor and ask Baby to hand them to you one by one.	28 Put bread crumbs out for the birds.
29 Sit on the porch in the afternoon. Talk about the falling leaves.	30 Crawl on the floor in front of Baby and challenge him to catch you.					
						 <b>Growing Child</b> A Division of Dawn & Hepple, Inc. For ages 6-24 months

# Fun things to do in September

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Write down Toddler's height and weight on this day on the calendar.	2 Labor Day. Enjoy a picnic outdoors while the weather's nice.	3 Paint with cotton swabs for a different art experience.	4 Let Toddler hold and feel a dry sponge. Then put it in a pan of water and let him feel it.	5 Read a chapter from the Wizard of Oz.	6 Give Toddler an easy chore that he will be responsible for.	7 Visit a pet store. Ask Toddler what his favorite animal is.
8 Take a walk around the block together—look for anything new or different.	9 Paint a smile on Youngster's knees with wash-off makeup.	10 Carry-out for dinner—No food to fix or dishes to wash!	11 What is the opposite of SLOW?	12 Save empty plastic bowls to use as bongo drums.	13 Wear bright orange today.	14 Go shopping. Buy a new album for yourself and one for Toddler.
15 Read a comforting story before bedtime.	16 Rosh Hashanah	17 Tape a BIG piece of paper to Toddler's door for him to write on.	18 What words rhyme with coat?	19 Mickey Mouse's Birthday! Celebrate with cheesecake for dessert. (Get it?!)	20 Find four green circle shapes in the house.	21 Hard-boiled eggs for a snack.
22 Give your child his own box of tissues to encourage "nose-wiping." Write his name on the box.	23 Ask Toddler to draw a picture of himself.	24 Save the daily newspaper every year on your child's birthday—give to him when he's older.	25 Yom Kippur Play family games instead of watching TV tonight.	26 Take a sieve into the bathtub. Where does the water go?	27 Let Toddler sort socks by size and color.	28 Purdue vs. Notre Dame. Attend a local football game.
29 Sit on the porch in the afternoon. Talk about the changing of the leaves.	30 Going to the dentist can be more pleasant if Toddler is allowed a new toy or gets to go out to eat.					

**Growing Child**

A Division of Dutton & Houghton, Inc.  
For ages 2-6 years



## Is honesty always the best policy?

'Little white lies' have a way of tripping you up. And besides, your honest example is the very best lesson for your children.

By Kaery Gillet

Most parents I know lie now and again to their children.

It might be to get cooperation around the house or to protect the kids from difficult truths.

Sometimes a parent hopes a lie will cover up blunders that might expose the adult's weaker side to the ones who look up to them for wisdom and strength.

Those who lie to their children usually do so with the best of intentions. But my guilt at the whitest of little white lies made

me think there might be a better way, at least for me.

My observations of my neighbors, along with my own trial and error, left me with three basic maxims on the subject of honesty.

### Three basic maxims

- The first is that children may not like the truth, but if it is worded in a way they can relate to, they can take it.

- Second, I don't have to always be right to maintain my child's respect. Honesty in expressing my feelings or admitting mistakes encourages him to deal with me in kind and develops mutual respect.

- Third, it is just as easy to tell the truth as to lie — perhaps easier in the long run.

### Children can 'take it'

Sometimes we're tempted to lie because something seems just too complex to explain.

My son, now six years old, has a set of those little green plastic soldiers that so many generations of boys in this country have had, and among his most prized possessions is a cowboy holster-and-gun set.

I felt uneasy about his desire for violent fantasy play, but I finally decided not to interfere.

One day, he asked for a soldier doll.

The advertisements and the doll's appearance trigger in me the image of a soldier of fortune, a profession to which I seriously object. The reasons for this are far too complex to explain to a six-year-old, who is not ready for somber discussions of international politics.

I bolstered my courage, reminded myself to be honest, and said: "Dear, this doll looks like a mercenary soldier. That bothers me so much that I will not allow you to have one in this house."

"Mom, what's a mer — a mera —"

"A mercenary soldier? It's someone who will fight in any war for anyone who pays him to do it."

"Well, why won't you let me have one?"

### Not at his level

I had obviously failed to relate to him at his level and doubted that I effectively would be able to at this point.

"I don't know how to explain it to you. All I can say is it upsets me so much that I will not buy it for you."

Of course, this doesn't end it at all. He still occasionally rubs it in.

"George has a soldier doll."

"Then I suggest you go play at George's."

Argument over. For the time being.

### In this issue

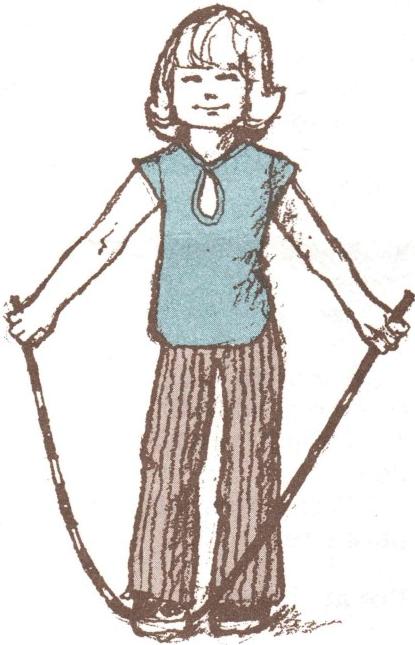
Honesty .....	Page 1
Is honesty with children always the best policy?	
Book review .....	Page 3
Baby gear guide helps parents be smart consumers.	
A child's lesson .....	Page 3
One mother learns to focus on what really matters.	
Childhood burns .....	Page 4
Putting a stop to this common cause of injury.	
Teaching children fire safety .....	Page 5
First-aid burn treatment ..	Page 5
Editor's page .....	Page 6
What Growing Child's Customer Service Department does for you.	
Activity calendar (6 months-2 years) .....	Page 7
Activity calendar (2-6 years) .....	Page 8

## Lies come back to you

I grant that I didn't handle this very well. It's a difficult subject that I didn't find an adequate answer for. But if I had told him "It's too expensive" or "Maybe you'll get one for Christmas" or any number of white lies, what would happen when I buy him something more costly or Christmas comes and there's no soldier doll? Kids do remember.

## Honest expression of feelings

Depending on the circumstances, I've found that the following answers to a young, inquisitive mind are perfectly acceptable, as long as they are the truth.



- When you're older, I can tell you more about this. But right now I don't know how to explain it to you."

- "It's too difficult for me to talk about, but it's nothing for you to worry over. The adults will take care of it."

- "I don't know."

I'm not suggesting that one should avoid a direct answer. But these answers are quite different from "Shut up and go to bed," "Only dumb people ask questions like that," "Mind your own

business," and other comebacks guaranteed to deflate a child's fragile ego.

## Complex situations

Another time lying is tempting is when a child wants attention and you just don't have the time or energy to comply.

When a child's feelings are at stake, it's important to be honest about what you can do and what you just don't have time for.

Sometimes, no matter how hard we try, we just can't follow through with a promised arrangement. In my case, I keep in mind how I would approach one of my adult friends with the same situation. I want to keep my friends, and I also want my child to trust my word.

## The truth is just as easy

Sometimes you lie because you've really blown it.

One day when my son was gone for the day, I decided to straighten his room. I categorized his toys, threw out broken ones I hadn't seen him play with in years, and gathered up the scrap papers that lay about in every drawer and corner.

When he came home, he went to the doorway of his room and said, "Where's my race car picture?"

"Race car picture?" I have always respected his belongings. If something is important to him, it's just as precious as my things are to me. By carelessly tossing things out, I had broken one of my own cardinal rules.

I was formulating a dozen lies that might get me out of this corner. But no. Let's put the truth to the test.

My answer blurted out like a sudden sneeze. "I threw it out."

He looked sad.

"It was important to you?"

"Yep."

"Well, it was crumpled up on the floor. There was so much paper everywhere. I just took it

up with the rest of the stuff."

Silence.

"I'll tell you what. It's not good to throw papers on the floor. I'll get you a scrapbook, and you can put the papers you like in there. Okay?"

The gloom lightened up a bit.

"Now, you understand: If you don't put your papers in the scrapbook, I will throw them away."

"Okay."

My son now has a scrapbook. That doesn't mean he always keeps his papers off the floor, but that's another story.

In this case, confessing wasn't easy. I could have told him that I didn't know where it was or that I hadn't seen it or that I must have put it away somewhere. But chances are he would have figured it out.

## The rewards are great

I recently had a parent-teacher conference with my son's first-grade teacher. Although his academic work was excellent, he had a "needs improvement" check in "finishing work."

His teacher explained that he talks too much and thus tends not to complete his work.

"But," she said, "he doesn't try to hide his incomplete work papers or lie to me about it. He admits his error and comes in during lunchtime, just as he promises to do, and finishes his work. You have a very honest little boy," she told me with a smile. "You can be very proud of him."

I am. And I hope that other parents will find as I did that it's easier in the long run to tell your beloved pixies the truth than it is to do what you don't want them to do — lie to you.

Kaery Gillet is a mother and owner of a court reporting firm. She has often contributed to professional magazines and is expecting two novels to be ready for publication this year.

## Book review

### A guide to choosing baby gear

By Lynn Holland

**The Baby Gear Guide: How to Make Smart Choices in Essential Baby Equipment**, by Taree Bollinger and Patricia Cramer. Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc., 1985. \$12.95 paperback, \$21.95 hardback. ISBN 0-201-10637-1.

There's no question that babies are big business. There's a lot of gear out there for them, and many new parents find themselves at a loss about what — or whether — to buy.

A new book, **The Baby Gear Guide: How to Make Smart Choices in Essential Baby Equipment**, is a complete consumer guide to over 35 categories of baby products.

It is written on the assumption that you only want to buy what you really need and will use, but that you want the best and safest products available when you do buy. The book talks about products by brand-name and provides general cost comparisons along with safety guidelines for new and passed-on equipment.

The book also includes:

- "Shopping guide cards" with fill-in spaces for important features and measurements.
- Hints on how equipment can enhance (or hinder) a baby's

growth, development, and personality.

• Tips on how to design a nursery.

• Guidelines for how to rate quality, durability, and safety.

• Inexpensive alternatives to most products.

The authors have also compiled indexes of baby equipment manufacturers and distributors and their addresses; a list of parent's magazines; mail-order outlets for baby gear; and state and local organizations that have the latest information on safety rules and regulations.

Lynn Holland is Associate Editor of Growing Child.

### A child's lesson: Focus on what really matters

By Mary Margaret Kern

My four-year-old daughter and I had an argument one morning. It was early fall, the leaves turning the bright colors of a patchwork quilt. The first cool of frost was in the air. In her jeans, beloved T-shirt with the heart on the front, and a jacket, my daughter turned up at the front door wearing her new white gloves.

I reached for her chubby hands. "You can't wear those gloves out to play."

She stared up at me. "Why not?"

"You'll get them dirty."

"No, I won't."

Ignoring the obvious uncertainty of that, I went on, "Anyway, they're for dress-up. They'll look silly at play."

"No, they won't. I want to wear them." Her lips trembled.

So she won that one. As I watched her from the living room window pedaling along on her tricycle on the sidewalk, my eyes were caught by those white gloves. They shone back at me as if they were mirrors.

I reviewed uneasily my fine-sounding adult argument about the gloves. Yes, the gloves would be dirtied, but — they would wash. Yes, they did look silly, but — who would care?

Did it truly matter she was wearing her gloves?

No, it didn't.

Testing myself with this concept of what truly matters isn't original with me. It came from my mother, who I realize (now!) was usually very wise. She believed that, when it was a matter of common sense (wearing rubbers or boots in rain or snow) or safety (not running into the street), it's vital to be firm. Other-

wise, it's useful to test many childhood preoccupations as to whether they truly matter, since the freedom and joy of childhood is easy to squelch with what we call practicality, a euphemism for imposing adult standards.

Musing on all this, I returned to the living room window to watch my daughter on her tricycle. This time it was not the gloves that caught my eye, but her smiling face. I realized then that if I could keep my mind on the concept of what truly matters, our home life would be calmer. Best of all, I could be making a gift of unmeasurable value — that of letting my children be children during their growing years.

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# Putting a stop to childhood burns

Burns are a common cause of injury and death in the home. They are most often caused by carelessness, and in most cases, they can be prevented.

By Suzette Mandell Hahn

Most often, burns are caused by carelessness. In most cases, they can be prevented.

## Causes of burns in the home

- **Tap water.** One of the most common causes of burns is also one of the most easily remedied — tap water.

The water from kitchen and bathroom faucets that is 145° can burn a child's delicate skin in three seconds. Water that is 155° takes only one second to cause a burn. Yet these temperatures may not seem unduly hot to adult hands.

Your hot water thermostat should be set below 130°. This water temperature is hot enough to wash dishes and clothes, yet low enough to be safe.

- **Kitchen.** It's best not to let your child play on the kitchen floor when you are cooking — put her in a playpen or high chair instead. A child underfoot can bump into you while you are carrying hot foods or liquids, foods hot enough to hurt her.

Pot handles should always be turned over the stove top and out of children's reach.

- **Hot food and drink.** Hot liquids can cause burns. Some, such as very hot grease, can stick to the skin and cause serious damage.

Coffee and tea can also cause a burn; it's not a good idea to let your child sit on your lap while you're drinking a hot drink. Also be sure the cup is not within your child's reach on a table.

- **Tablecloths and candles.**

A child can pull on a tablecloth in an attempt to stand up or reach something and bring everything crashing or pouring on top of

him.

Candles should be placed in non-tippable holders and extinguished whenever you leave the room, however briefly.

- **Cigarettes.** Likewise, if you smoke, a cigarette should never be left burning in an ashtray. Aside from the danger of the cigarette causing a fire, children have been burned on the hands and mouth when imitating adult smoking behavior.

- **Fireplaces and stoves.** Many homes are equipped with fireplaces and wood-burning stoves. They add warmth and beauty to a home, but because of the tremendous heat output, children should be supervised when in the same room. An accidental fall against a hot stove or fireplace will result in a bad burn.

Take care also to keep children away from portable heaters and even radiators. A child sleeping or playing on the floor can roll into a radiator and be burned.

- **Electrical burns.** Electrical burns are also common but often deceptive. A child who has received an electric shock may have little damage on the surface, yet may be severely burned internally.

The complications from an electrical burn can be very serious; all electrical burns must receive prompt medical attention.

- **In the home,** electrical burns can happen when a child puts the joint where an appliance is connected to an extension cord in his mouth, or puts his finger, tongue, or other object into an electrical socket. Unused sockets should be capped.

## Outdoor hazards

- **Grills.** During the warm weather months, keep children away from your outdoor grill. Children do not have the experience adults have, and may not realize that white coals are just as hot as flaming ones — after all, they don't look hot. Be sure to keep caustic or flammable liquids, such as lighter fluid, out of your child's reach.

- **Sunshine.** Sunshine can cause a bad burn on an infant or small child. Most children need some protection while outdoors.

An infant often doesn't have enough hair to protect his scalp, and fair or blonde children may burn more easily than their dark-complexioned brothers and sisters.

While hats and umbrellas may help, you also need to apply a sunscreen to all exposed skin and reapply after swimming or running through the sprinkler.

- **Clothing.** Even the clothes your child wears can contribute to his safety. When buying children's clothes, consider the content and flammability of the fabrics. Some may not be flammable, but may melt and cause localized burns.

- **Fire safety.** Although most children are burned through scalds or contact with hot surfaces, don't assume that fire will never strike your home.

Install smoke detectors and check them frequently. Assign small children a bedroom close to yours and teach them never to hide in a closet or under a bed during a fire.

Have planned escape routes from the house, and a designated place outside where the family is to meet.

Suzette Mandell Hahn frequently writes on the subjects of nutrition and child care.

## Teaching children fire safety

By Diane Morris

No parent wants to think about their child being burned. But by teaching your child a few simple safety precautions, you can take comfort in the fact that your youngster would know what to do if, for instance, his clothes caught on fire.

When you talk to your child about fire safety, take the time to ask questions and make sure he understands the purpose of the precautions.

### Stop, drop and roll

Tell your child that today she will learn what to do if her clothes catch on fire. Make clear that

there are three things to do **right away** if this should happen:

- **Stop** where you are (running makes the fire worse);
- **Drop** to the ground with your hands over your face;
- **Roll** over and over until the fire is out.

Demonstrate the exercise and then have your child practice with you.

You may have to physically help a three-year-old do the exercise many times before he can perform it himself. A four-year-old may need some initial assistance but a five-year-old will probably learn quickly. Repetition is the key.

The Children's Television Workshop, creators of Sesame Street, have developed a **Fire Safety Book**. The book contains

skits, songs, fingerplays and games that will reinforce the fire safety messages appropriate for preschoolers.

The book includes ways to teach children to:

- Tell a grown-up whenever they find matches.
- Put a burn in cool water as quickly as possible.

• Bend low under the smoke when exiting a burning house.

For your copy of the **Fire Safety Book**, send \$2.00 to:

The Children's Television Workshop  
Community Education Service Division  
Dept. FS One Lincoln Plaza  
New York, New York 10023

Diane Morris is a Growing Parent staff writer.

## Burn treatment starts with cool water

Despite every precaution, accidents still happen, and if they do it is important to know what to do.

### First-degree burns

First-degree burns will be red, slightly swollen, and painful, but not blistered. Treat with cold water to relieve pain and swelling.

Immerse the burnt area or apply a clean cloth which has been soaked in cold water. If you want to apply a dressing, use dry gauze. Call the doctor as soon as possible; burns are often more serious than they look.

### Second-degree burns

A second-degree burn is red and blotchy, very painful, and may be blistered or wet-looking.

Immerse the area in cold water, and dress with sterile gauze squares held in place by gauze bandages. Seek medical help immediately. Refresh the dressing with drops of cold water while waiting for help or on the way to the hospital.

### Third-degree burns

If your child has a third-degree burn, do not apply water. This is the most serious burn; the burnt area looks white and charred.

A third-degree burn may cause such deep tissue damage that the child will feel no pain. Apply several layers of dry, non-fibrous cloth, such as a sheet, and get immediate help.

### All burns

Do not apply butter, grease, ointment, cream, or any other preparation to any burn, as they will trap the heat.

Do not break any blisters that may form on the burn.

Never try to remove any clothing that is sticking to the burn. In the case of a scald or chemical burn, remove all non-sticking clothing which is saturated with the liquid.

Above all, seek medical attention for all burns. Minor burns that may not appear serious may be so because of their location or depth.

### Sunburns

Treat sunburns like first- and second-degree burns. Cool your child by applying cloths soaked in cool, not cold, water, or by immersing her in cool water.

Give her fluids to drink.

If she is severely burnt, having trouble breathing, or in shock, get immediate medical help.

— SHM

# From the Editor



Nancy  
Kleckner

## We're here to help

If you've had occasion to call our office, most likely the person you talked to was one of our customer service representatives.

And most likely you weren't calling long distance just to tell us how much you like our newsletter.

No, you were probably calling to tell us that your issue hadn't arrived. Or that it had arrived, but it was the wrong one.

These are the two most common situations we hear about from our readers, and the most important thing we have to say about either one of them is that whatever happened, it wasn't done deliberately or on purpose!

Our business is newsletters and we have to do our job right or we're out of business. So we're very much interested in seeing that each and every one of our customers gets what he or she paid for.

### Lost issues

What happens to those issues that never arrive? Why do issues arrive faithfully for months and years and then suddenly stop coming?

I wish I had the answer for both of these questions. It would be easy for us to blame the postal service, and I'm sure some of the missing issues do fall in the cracks between here and your house.

But by and large, the postal service does a good job in processing our large volume of mail (over 3½ million pieces last year), answering our questions and seeing that we're up-to-date on postal rules and regulations.

We do know some of the reasons issues go astray:

- Mis-delivery to the wrong address.
- Incorrect address.
- Change in address (no longer at the address listed).
- Lost in handling, either at our office,

enroute, or on the delivery route.

So, while we can't always say exactly what happened to the issue that did not arrive, we can say what we're going to do about the ones you didn't get: Replace them (or if you prefer, extend your subscription).

### When you move

If you move and your Growing Child issues don't, we'll see that you get duplicates of the issues you missed. To change an address, we need both your old and new address and at least six weeks' advance notice. We realize that isn't always possible, but the sooner you can let us know, the better.

We've learned from experience, also, that sometimes a call to your local postmaster can help speed up delivery on your end. (Growing Child is mailed third class mail, which isn't always worked as quickly as first class mail.)

If you receive your issue, but it's the wrong one, there are two possibilities: We simply sent the wrong one, or we have your child's birthdate listed incorrectly. Since everything we mail revolves around this birthdate, it's the most important piece of information you give us.

### When you write

Finally, if you do write to us, there are two pieces of information that will assure you of a speedy reply. First, be sure your address is included so we can reply.

Second, your own personal customer number, located above your name on the mailing label, is a big help.

We offer the best guarantee around: If for any reason you are dissatisfied with our products or services, let us know and we'll refund your money 100%.

*Nancy Kleckner*

# Fun things to do in October

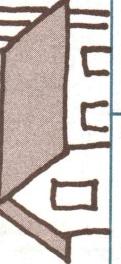
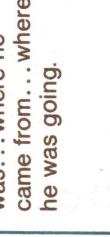
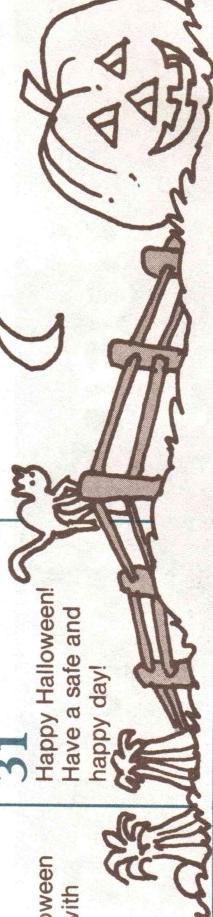
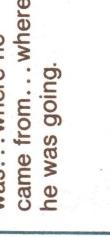
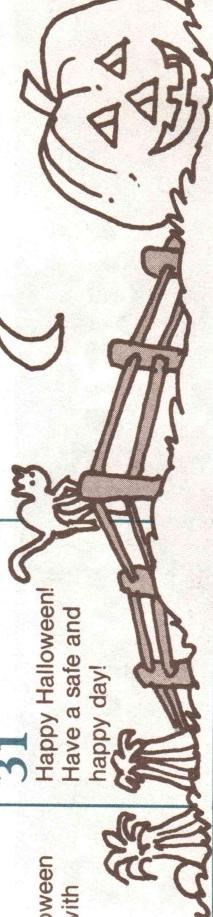
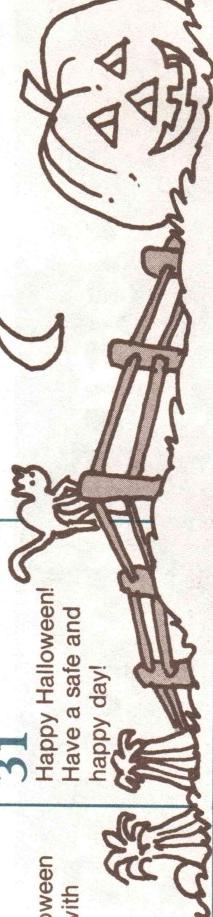
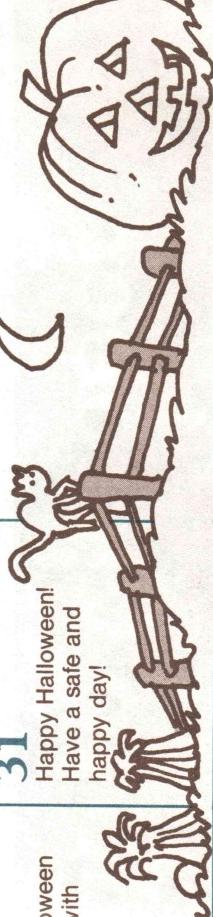
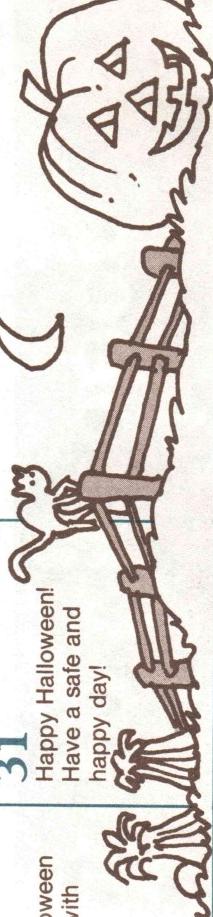
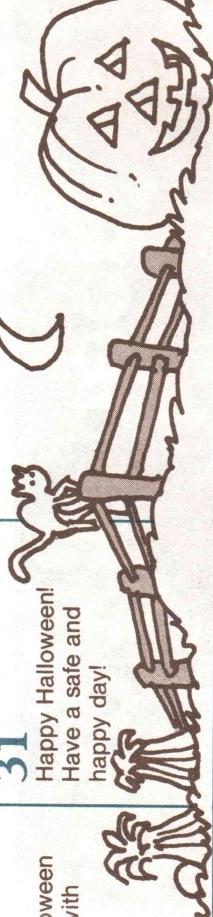
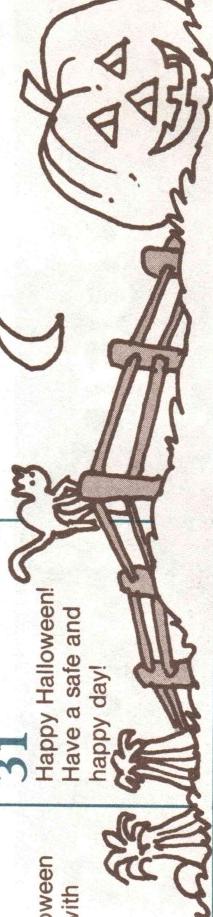
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>Growing Child</b> <small>A Division of Dena &amp; Wright, Inc.</small>						
For ages 6-24 months						
<b>1</b> Lie on the floor with Baby and encourage him to roll over.	<b>2</b> Hugs for everyone—twice!	<b>3</b> Listen to the wind outside.	<b>4</b> Give Baby a foot massage.	<b>5</b> Tomato juice for breakfast.	<b>6</b> Columbus Day.	
<b>7</b> Universal Children's Day—to celebrate worldwide understanding among children.	<b>8</b> Go through the house and point out things that are blue.	<b>9</b> Where is Baby's back?	<b>10</b> Toss a small bean bag back and forth to each other.	<b>11</b> Read <i>Pat the Bunny</i> , by Dorothy Kunhardt.	<b>12</b> Columbus Day.	
<b>13</b> Sing a song while taking a bath.	<b>14</b> Thanksgiving Day in Canada.	<b>15</b> Make various facial expressions for Baby to imitate.	<b>16</b> Go for a walk outside. Let Baby feel the textures of the leaves.	<b>17</b> Name Baby's food when she's eating—cereal, fruit...	<b>18</b> Count Baby's fingers and toes.	
<b>20</b> Start making a Halloween costume for Baby.	<b>21</b> Use a puppet to tell Baby a story.	<b>22</b> Play with a small doll.	<b>23</b> Give Baby a shoe box to put small toys in.	<b>24</b> United Nations Day.	<b>25</b> Cheese bites for a snack.	
<b>27</b> Give Baby a safe pan to bang on.	<b>28</b> Trace Baby's feet with an orange crayon—her hands with a black crayon.	<b>29</b> Wear a bright colored sweater today.	<b>30</b> Play pat-a-cake.	<b>31</b> Happy Halloween! Have a safe and happy day!		

# Fun things to do in October

## Growing Child

A Division of Dawn & Wright, Inc.

For ages 2-6 years

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1</b> True or false? Apples are blue? 	<b>2</b> Look through a magnifying glass at various things in your house. 	<b>3</b> Count all the threes on this page. 	<b>4</b> Draw a picture of your ears. 	<b>5</b> Help make beds. 		
<b>6</b> Sing a song while taking a bath. 	<b>7</b> Universal Children's Day—to celebrate worldwide understanding among children. 	<b>8</b> How does this person feel? 	<b>9</b> What color is the roof of your house? 	<b>10</b> Put together a puzzle. 	<b>11</b> Read <i>Millions of Cats</i> , by Wanda Gág. Then draw a cat 	<b>12</b> Columbus Day. Talk about who he was... where he came from... where he was going. 
<b>13</b> Make a home made bird feeder for the winter birds. 	<b>14</b> Thanksgiving Day in Canada—what day is it in the U.S.? 	<b>15</b> Cut pictures out of a magazine and arrange them to tell a story. 	<b>16</b> Go for a walk and look for orange leaves? 	<b>17</b> How many steps from your bedroom to the kitchen? 	<b>18</b> How many fingernails do you have? 	<b>19</b> Hang Indian corn on the doorway. Talk about the colors. 
<b>20</b> Start making your Halloween costume. 	<b>21</b> Organize a neighborhood wiener roast for this weekend. 	<b>22</b> Draw orange and black triangles. 	<b>23</b> Is there a toy library in your town? 	<b>24</b> United Nations Day. What city is the U.N. building in? 	<b>25</b> Cheese and crackers for a snack. 	<b>26</b> Carve your pumpkin—or draw a face with black markers. 
<b>27</b> Play "I Spy..." 	<b>28</b> Roast pumpkin seeds for a nutritious snack. 	<b>29</b> What is today's date? 	<b>30</b> Discuss Halloween safety rules with Toddler. 	<b>31</b> Happy Halloween! Have a safe and happy day! 		

## 'Time Out' helps control children's behavior

By Whitney M. Jacobs

Some people manage their kitchens with a timer.

I manage my children that way.

"Time Out," as it is referred to by behavior experts, saves me a lot of aggravation and gives my children a few pensive moments to dwell on what has happened.

What is "Time Out?"

Time Out is discipline by social isolation, like "Go to your room!" only calmer, more structured, and much less appealing to the child.

If you tell your child to go to his room, what's he likely to do? Play with toys? Read a book? Take a nap? It's bound to be something entertaining — or destructive. Time Out serves the purpose of isolation — but in a place where it's no fun to be.

### Choosing a place

The first thing you need for

Time Out is a fairly secluded place where there are few distractions — a chair in the dining room or a stair step, for example. Although secluded, it should also be easily observable, as an occasional check may be necessary.

The second thing you need is a timer. Most experts recommend as many minutes of Time Out as the child is old — four minutes for a four-year-old, six minutes for a six-year-old. Set the timer as soon as the child is settled.

### Time out rules

We have a rule about Time Out behavior: If you misbehave during Time Out, more minutes are added. In our house, name-calling, bellowing, or screaming from the Time Out chair warrant an extra minute for each offense.

It was after one eight-minute session in the Time Out chair that our four-year-old realized that silence was the golden key to freedom. Children learn this quickly, especially if they are warned beforehand. Continued misbehavior in the Time Out place calls for restriction of some other privileges, like television for the afternoon.

Discuss Time Out with your child before you begin using it. Explain which infractions warrant Time Out, but don't heap on the rules. Work on only one or two behaviors at a time. We

started with name-calling and bad language. After a very few days, our daughter almost stopped both behaviors.

### Real advantages

One of the nicest things about using Time Out is the lack of aggravation. When you're ready to shout, simply stay calm instead and say, "That's a Time-Out offense."

I still find myself raising my voice when giving that direction, but not nearly as loudly or angrily as I did before. And I know, too, that if a child is in the Time-Out chair in the dining room, he isn't tearing curtains or peeling wallpaper in the bedroom.

One of the other nice things about Time Out is its applicability to any member of the family. Soon after Time-Outs had curbed our daughter's swearing, something she did prompted me to say "Damn!"

Her response was "Time Out for you, Mommy."

I think I may have surprised her when I went, but I felt better for it. I stayed only seven minutes, but everyone knew I was in Time Out and wasn't to be talked to. I had seven minutes all to myself to consider the absurdity of my anger and inappropriate language.

Can you remember the last time you had seven minutes completely alone? Time Out can really be good for the whole family!

Whitney Jacobs is a mother of two, a full-time teacher, and part-time writer from Concord, Vermont.

In this issue	
Time out.....	Page 1
Time-honored discipline method helps keep the peace.	
A case against 'should'....	Page 2
Should you eliminate 'should' from your vocabulary?	
Death of a pet.....	Page 3
Helping your child cope with a difficult situation.	
Letters to the Editor.....	Page 5
Back Page.....	Page 6
Activity calendar (6 months-2 years).....	Page 7
Activity calendar (2-6 years).....	Page 8

# A case against 'should'

By Barbara Stein

"Should" is a powerful word. Dependable, too. It guarantees an unpleasant response.

Preceeded by "I," and followed by "but," should nags at our guilt.

"I **should** spend more time with my child, but. . ."

"I **should** organize this messy house, but. . ."

Introduced by "you" and exchanged by adults, **should** implies personal criticism.

"You **should** teach your child better manners."

"You **should** use cloth diapers instead of disposables."

When passed from parent to child, **should's** authoritative ring inflicts shame and confusion.

"You **should** be a good boy."

"You **should** stop sucking your thumb."

And once children learn its power, the cycle is renewed.

"Mommy, you **should** look both ways."

"I **should** be nice to my brother, but. . ."

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**"Do not do unto others as you would they **should** do unto you. Their tastes may not be the same."**

**George Bernard Shaw**

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## Unwelcome tenant

Left unattended, this intrusive verb can hang around for a lifetime. So why do we allow it? Where does it come from? And how can we banish it from our legacy?

Webster defines "**should**" as the past tense of "shall," and calls it "an obligation, a duty. . ." But to me, this definition lacks substance. It says nothing about how "**shoulds**" make us feel.

"**Should**," in our society, is a verbal message and is only rarely used in print. Editors see to that, especially in self-help articles. Advertisers also steer clear of **should**. They know that consumers react badly when they're told how they **should** (or



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**Why do we allow the word **should** to make us feel guilty, ashamed, confused? How can we break the cycle that comes from our parents to us and from us to our children?**

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**should not**) spend their money.

## Do unto others?

I think George Bernard Shaw struck closest to home when he warned: "Do not do unto others as you would they **should** do unto you. Their tastes may not be the same."

Shaw's clever parody pokes fun at our **should**-tendencies and hints at the folk origin of the word. **Should**, it seems, is highly contagious.

Skeptics need only look at the family **should** cycle. The tendency to **should** comes from our parents to us, from us to each other, and from us to our children.

More enlightening is why it persists. The messages of "**should**" are steeped in personal judgements and values that linger from childhood.

## Following suit

If when you were a child, for example, you heard lots of **shoulds**, chances are you're following suit as a parent.

This must have been the case with a mother I observed lunching with her child in a restaurant. "You **should** always put your left hand in your lap," she told the boy sternly.

But as I watched them, I noticed that Mom set no example. Between cutting the child's food and snatching at her own meal, her hands were constantly busy.

Predictably, the boy also noticed. "Mommy, you **should** always put your left hand in your lap," he scolded. No doubt about it, I thought. The **should** cycle was well underway in this family.

## Should as a threat

Not all **should** messages relate to table manners or teachings of new behavior. Very often they're issued as threats to discourage unacceptable conduct.

One day a neighborhood friend marched into three-year-old Andrea's bedroom and grabbed a favorite teddy. Outraged, Andrea snatched it back. During the tug-of-war that followed, Mom appeared.

"You **should** learn to share your toys," Mom said angrily. "You **should** share with your friends."

But Andrea, at age three, had experienced few social situations. In fact, she was accustomed to playing alone. But the first stirrings of guilt brought on by the **shoulds** were painfully real. Andrea felt ashamed and confused and cried bitterly.

## Banishing shoulds

For those ready to break the **should** cycle, here are some general tips:

- Tune into the messages of "**should**." Determine what you're really saying and listen for recurring themes. Ask yourself: Am I teaching values from my childhood? Do these values apply to my child? What are the unwritten codes in my family?

- Substitute other words. Catch yourself mid-sentence and shift to another word. Try introducing your sentences with "I" or "It" or take a new approach.

Andrea's mom, for example, could have softened her message in several ways: "I'd like you to share your toys" or "It's polite to share with friends."

Taking a new approach, try to appeal to the child's "helping" nature: "Maybe you can help your friend learn to share." Experiment to find out what works.

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**To break the *should* cycle, listen to what you're really saying. Set goals to help eliminate *shoulds*. Do the best you can, but don't tell yourself that you *should* do it!**

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- Ask your spouse or friends for help. If you find you're prone to "**should**" patterns, a gentle reminder each time may help you control the urge.

- As you cut down on your use of shoulds, observe the effects. Watch for positive response from your child. You'll be amazed at the difference.

- Above all, don't tell yourself that you "**should**" eliminate "**shoulds**." Set goals and do the best you can. Give yourself a fighting chance!

Barbara Stein is a speech pathologist and freelance writer.



## Helping your child cope with the death of a pet

By Marilyn Pribus

"Something's wrong," three-year-old Melissa told her mother. "Oscar won't wake up."

One touch on the hamster's cold little body told Mom that Oscar never would.

Five-year-old Mark was delivering papers with his older sister when a speeding motorcycle struck and instantly killed their dog Shadow.

Sara, 4, can't remember a time when Cleo hasn't slept on the rag rug beside her bed. But the cat, three times Sara's age, is sick and the once-fluffy fur is now thin. The vet recommends euthanasia.

### Kids and pets: a great team

Children and pets go together in a wonderful way. An animal never yells or scolds. Even a fish or a turtle can be a loving friend. Dogs and cats form a real bond of unconditional love with youngsters and the death of such an animal companion can be deeply painful.

Helping your child cope with such a loss isn't easy, but treating death as a natural, though sad, part of living will be most helpful to your youngster.

It's unusual that a child has not seen a dead animal, perhaps along a highway. Without dwelling morbidly on the subject of death, take the opportunity to discuss it from time to time in a neutral way. Judith Viorst's excellent children's book **The Tenth Good Thing About Barney**, makes good reading even before the death of a pet and may help initiate a conversation.

You can explain that everything which is alive — robins and marigolds and cats and people — will some day die. To die means that the plant or animal or person will no longer eat or drink or grow. Some things like small insects live only a few days, some animals like dogs or cats may live for ten or fifteen years, (Continued on next page)

people usually live to be seventy or eighty, and some things like bristlecone pine trees live for thousands of years. ("More years than you can count.")

### Death is not sleep

It's important to let a child know that although it may look as though a dead animal is sleeping, there is a great difference between sleep and death. When an animal goes to sleep, it wakes up again; when an animal is dead, its heart has stopped and its breathing has stopped and it will never be awake again.

Point out that the death of something or someone we love is very sad and we might even cry because we will never be together again. However, it's important to mention that when we remember good times we can bring back the good feelings about a dead friend, whether an animal or a person, and that can be almost like being together.



If your personal philosophy involves a hereafter, it would certainly be appropriate to include in your discussion.

If you, too, are sad at the death of an animal, share your sorrow. Let your youngster know it's okay (and very normal) to cry and grieve either with you or in private.

### Planning a pet funeral

Should an animal die, have a funeral of some sort.

Melissa's parents helped her put Oscar in a cotton lined box and bury him between two rose bushes. (The location made it less likely that Melissa would later dig Oscar up out of curiosity.) She and her father found a flat stone about five inches across and with a permanent felt pen he printed Melissa's words, "Oscar: a neat pal."

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### It's important not to belittle the value of a lost pet by rushing to replace it.

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Since Mark lived in a condominium, it was impossible to bury his dog Shadow at home.

Although it was a considerable expense, his mother was investigating a pet cemetery when a family friend offered a gravesite on a back corner of her large lot where two of her own pets were buried.

When Mom (and even her friend) wept, Mark finally cried, too. On the way home, Mark, his mother and his older sister discussed getting a new puppy. "But not right yet, Mom," Mark said. "That'd be like we didn't care about Shadow."

Mark was wise. It's important not to belittle the value of a lost friend by rushing to replace it.

### Dealing with euthanasia

If the sudden death of a pet is upsetting, the deliberate ending of life can be even more devastating, so be extremely discreet in any discussions.

Children overhearing adult conversations may conclude that if they should become grievously injured or ill, they, too, may be "put out of their misery."

It is important to include older children — mature pre-teens and teenagers — in decisions about euthanasia, but this is too big a responsibility for a young child. Sara's parents sadly decided it

was kindest to put their cat to sleep. When her father left for the vet's office, he explained that Cleo was very sick and had to be examined by the animal doctor. When he returned home he was able to say truthfully that the cat had been too sick to live and she was dead. He made a point of bringing the cat home for burial.

### Feelings about death

When a pet dies, there are predictable feelings to work through: denial, fear, anger, sorrow. There's a tendency for people of all ages to think: "There must have been something I could have done." Assure children that this feeling of guilt is a very normal part of accepting death.

Preschoolers are starting to focus their attention outside the home, but the loss of a pet is perhaps harder to bear because they are beginning to have an understanding of the finality of death. The pet may have been a confidante and ally when there were disagreements with the friends the child is starting to make or with family members.

### An enduring memory

The remembrance of a loving pet is one of the most enduring of all adult memories. No matter what has happened, even in the heart-wrenching case of a youngster actually responsible for the animal's death, assure your child that you know he or she loved the pet. And tell your youngster you're positive the animal returned that love. Although the pet is dead, happy memories can linger throughout a lifetime.

Marilyn Pribus, a frequent contributor to *Growing Parent*, is a mother, teacher, and para-professional in the field of mental health. She and her husband live in Fair Oaks, California, with Nelly, their thirteen-year-old dog whom the vet tactfully calls a "terrier type."

# Growing Dear Child



Readers write  
to Growing Child

## Letterbox

**How do you get the best interaction between doctor and child?**  
Both my sons recently needed to see specialists, who treated the medical problems but seemed to disregard the fact they were dealing with small children. How can parents encourage professionals in the medical field to treat us and our children as people and not cars coming in for a tune-up?

Nina Mucha  
Johnson City, NY

### Helium not dangerous — but balloons can be

I'd like to correct a statement in the June, 1985 *Growing Parent* about the danger of helium in foil balloons.

Helium is an inert gas and does not chemically affect anything. In sufficient quantities, any gas can cause asphyxiation, but it's hard to imagine the volume of gas in a balloon doing this.

The dangerous situation described by your reader was caused by the balloon. Aluminized mylar (the "foil") doesn't stretch much and can break explosively when overheated, just as an egg in a microwave or an aerosol can in a fire can explode because their contents can't expand. At regular temperatures, mylar balloons are safe, although tiny teeth can scrape off the aluminum coating!

Rick Cordray  
Beaverton, OR

### Patterned cloths provide entertainment in carseat

When my son Christopher was still too small to grasp toys, I would provide visual stimulation for him while he was in the carseat by draping a brightly patterned towel in front of him to give him something to study.

My favorite patterns were on dish towels which also came in handy as burp pads wherever we were.

Diane S. Oiton  
Ontario, CA

### Trust in Mom and Dad helps child accept self

When our daughter, Sarah, was about three, we began getting comments about her smallness.

We would answer, "She's just the right size." The people got the message right away because we meant it. Sarah would hear us and because of her trust in Mom and Dad, she believed she was "just the right size."

Barbara Gluckin  
New Knoxville, OH

### Bigger is not always better

Bigger is not necessarily better, and smaller doesn't mean inferior. It's important for parents to learn to accept children as they are. By becoming defensive when someone says "He's so little," we're saying it's not acceptable to be small. I'm going to practice this approach, "Yes, and we like him that way."

Encourage small children to participate in sports in which size is not a factor. Physical

accomplishments may help boost self confidence, and help a child deal with teasing.

Sharon Hu  
San Diego, CA

### Close in age children require sense of humor

Reading the letter about "close in age babies" made me smile. My oldest daughter turns fifteen today. My son turned fourteen two weeks ago, so for two weeks they have both been fourteen.

"Busy, hectic, and sometimes frustrating" are mild words for those early years. I would add boisterous, harried, and sometimes frightening, too. But we made it through and I believe the key is a sense of humor. You can laugh at just about anything if you stand back and look at it through objective eyes. If you have to clean up the umpteenth mess, grumping and complaining won't get the job done any faster. You might as well see the humor in it.

Cobie and Jon are great friends. They have always enjoyed being "twins" for two weeks of every year, feeling it makes them a little unique.

Louise Hurd  
North Ogden, UT

"Dear Growing Child" is a forum for our readers to share their personal thoughts, opinions, comments, and experiences. We welcome your responses to questions that appear periodically. The letters published do not necessarily represent the views of Growing Child.

All letters to the editor will be treated as having been submitted for publication. If you do not want your correspondence published, please specify this in your letter. Names withheld upon request. We reserve the right to edit for publication.

# The Back Page

## Halloween: The scariest night of the year — for parents

Halloween began as a playful opportunity for children to act out their fantasies. However, today dangerous costumes, deadly treats and roadway accidents can turn Halloween into tragedy.

Before those excited ghosts, clowns and super heroes go off into the night, take a few precautions to insure their journey will be a safe one.

- Attach reflector strips to costumes and give children flashlights to carry.
- Costumes should be non-flammable and short enough to allow a child to walk without tripping. Make sure shoes fit properly and have low heels. Check for sharp or pointed edges on costumes, containers or props.
- Maybe your child can see straight ahead in that mask. But can she see to the left and right? Play it safe, use make-up instead.
- Warn children to wait until they get home before sampling the treats.
- Throw away all unwrapped or opened candy. Examine all items to make sure they don't contain any dangerous "ingredients." If in doubt, THROW IT OUT. (Some hospitals provide free X-rays to check treats.)
- Restrict trick-or-treat visits to the homes of friends and relatives. The extra "loot" isn't worth the danger to your child.
- It's a good idea to have a responsible adult accompany children who are out after dark.
- Make clear that acts of vandalism are not allowed.

### Rules of the road

This is a good time to remind your children of some basic rules of the road.

- Never cross a street without looking left and right.

- Observe all traffic signs and regulations.
- Stress that a child should never talk to strangers. Remind her that adults rarely ask youngsters for directions. If someone should stop to ask directions or offer a ride, candy, or some other treat, she should know not to go near the car.

### Plan a Halloween party

One very simple way parents can avoid the risks of trick-or-treating is to plan a Halloween party.

Get together with friends and make arrangements to hold a party at the local church or community hall. Even the basement or family room of a private home can give several children a place to enjoy the holiday — and provide parents some peace of mind.

## Mail alert: Be aware of the dangers of product samples

Sue Atkinson, a Growing Child subscriber from Chicago, recently alerted us to a potentially dangerous situation involving the distribution of product samples through the mails.

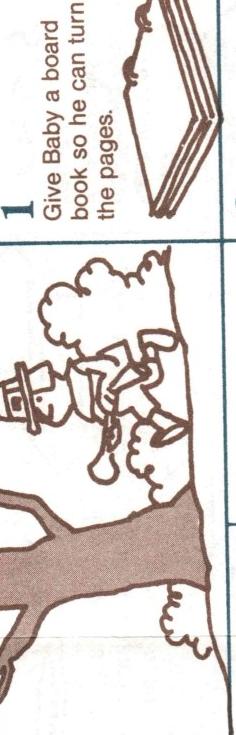
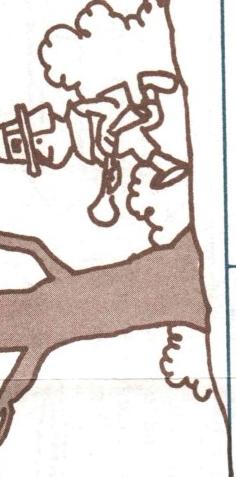
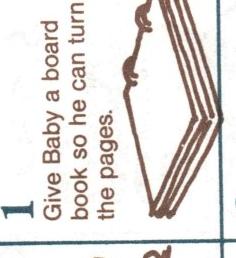
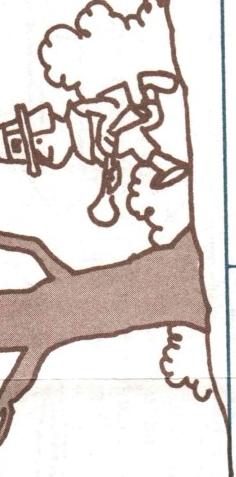
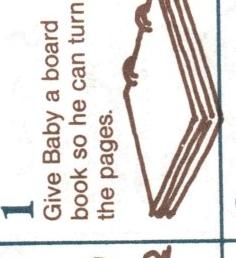
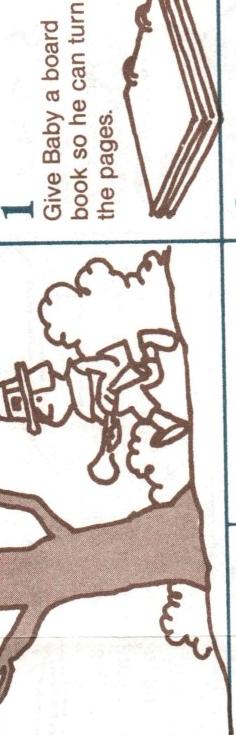
The problem arises when small children get to the mail before you do — or are able to "rescue" discarded samples from the trash. Five or six cold capsules, a small bottle of tile cleaner, or a sample package of razor blades could have tragic consequences if swallowed or opened by an inquisitive child.

If you have mail coming into your home in a way that toddlers can get at it — through a slot in the door, for instance, or if you put the mail in a place children can reach — be aware of the potential danger of the situation and take precautions that may seem necessary in your household.

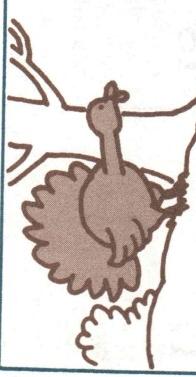
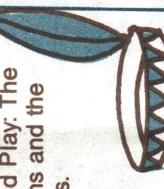
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# Fun things to do in November

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						
<b>Growing Child</b> A Division of Dunn & Hargitt, Inc. For ages 6-24 months.						
<b>1</b> Give Baby a board book so he can turn the pages. 	<b>2</b> Put an inexpensive radio in Baby's room so she can enjoy music also. 	<b>3</b> Play "This Little Piggy Went to Market". 	<b>4</b> Drop clothespins into a wide-mouthed plastic container. 	<b>5</b> Massage Baby's feet—and then get someone to massage yours! 	<b>6</b> Visit a pet store. 	<b>7</b> Bang on a soft drum. 
<b>8</b> Show Baby a picture upside down—see if he turns it right side up. 	<b>9</b> Let Baby look at herself in the mirror when she's eating some food. 	<b>10</b> Turn on the alarm clock so Baby can hear what kind of noise it makes. 	<b>11</b> Veteran's Day. 	<b>12</b> Hide a toy under a blanket and encourage Baby to look for it. 	<b>13</b> Read three new Mother Goose rhymes. 	<b>14</b> Say the names of everyone in the family. 
<b>15</b> Encourage Baby to say please and thank you when he takes or hands things to you. 	<b>16</b> Put a record on and dance around the room. 	<b>17</b> Where are Mommy's toes? Where are Daddy's ears? 	<b>18</b> Put Baby's crib or high chair near a window so she can see outside. 	<b>19</b> Let Baby feel the water running from a faucet. 	<b>20</b> Hold hands and walk up and down stairs together. 	<b>21</b> Whistle a song to Baby. 
<b>22</b> Look for circles inside the house. 	<b>23</b> Give Baby a box to push on the floor. 	<b>24</b> Give Baby his own towel to imitate you drying the dishes. 	<b>25</b> Name body parts on Baby's toy doll—arms, legs, etc. 	<b>26</b> Feel the different materials of the furniture in the house. 	<b>27</b> Getting ready for tomorrow? Arrange to leave Baby with a playmate today. 	<b>28</b> Thanksgiving Day. Everyone in the family name one thing they are thankful for. 
<b>29</b> Hug a friend today. 	<b>30</b> Take items that float into the bathtub. 					

# Fun things to do in November

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<b>Growing Child</b> A Division of Dame & Harpitt, Inc.  For ages 2-6 years.					
<b>3</b> Look through the Growing Child Christmas Catalog and make wishes.	<b>4</b> Can you dial the phone number for police, fire dept. and ambulance?	<b>5</b> Election Day. Write the word "Vote."	<b>6</b> Pretend play: At the pet store.	<b>7</b> Have Mom or Dad write your name on paper and then trace it with a red marker.	<b>8</b> Do a somersault— forwards and backwards.	<b>2</b> Take a magnet around the house— what does and doesn't stick to it? 
<b>10</b> Tear construction paper into various shapes and glue on paper to make a collage.	<b>11</b> Veteran's Day. Do you know a veteran? Draw a picture to give to him/her.	<b>12</b> Crumple up newspaper to use as a ball indoors. 	<b>13</b> Alphabet soup for lunch. 	<b>14</b> Play "London Bridge is Falling Down." 	<b>15</b> What colors are the clothes you have on today? 	<b>9</b> French toast for breakfast. 
<b>17</b> Read a chapter from a book every night this week.	<b>18</b> Spread cream cheese on crackers and make a face with raisins. 	<b>19</b> Tie string to a paper towel tube; roll in honey, then birdseed. Hang from a tree outside. 	<b>20</b> Use rice to learn measurements. Pour $\frac{1}{4}$ cup, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup, etc. 	<b>21</b> Which way is left? Which way is right? 	<b>22</b> Describe the differences between an apple and a banana. 	<b>16</b> Can you march? Put on a record and pretend to be in a marching band. 
<b>24</b> Pig-in-a-blanket for supper.	<b>25</b> Sing "Ten Little Indians" How are the Indians important to Thanksgiving? 	<b>26</b> Draw a picture of a turkey. Give him a name. 	<b>27</b> Pretend Play: The Pilgrims and the Indians. 	<b>28</b> Thanksgiving Day. Everyone in the family name one thing they are thankful for. 	<b>29</b> Hug a friend today. 	<b>30</b> How many days to Christmas? To Hanukkah?

# Growing Parent®

November 1985  
Vol. 13 No. 11

## Guess what — it's twins!

*What's it like to have two at a time? A mother of four (that's two sets of two!) talks about the problems — and rewards — of raising multiples.*

By Mary Jo Wight

Twins!

It seems I have been surrounded by twins all my life. Twin uncles, twin nieces, and twin daughters (two sets born seven years apart to the day) trim my family tree.

My closest friends are parents of twins. Mothers of multiples tend to cluster, not just to swap snowsuits and strollers, but to laugh and cry together. My experiences have convinced me that those specialists who study childhood growth and development have neglected twins — and their parents.

### Plenty of information, but . . .

Don't misunderstand. There is lots of material about twins.

But although the stages of development seem the same for twins as for single-born children,

each step is complicated and accentuated by the presence of two tiny people to bathe, feed, toilet train, encourage, instruct, and discipline. Consider, for instance, the first few months of babies' lives.



### The early months

During the first year, behavior specialists say, babies begin to perceive the world as a safe

#### In this issue

Guess what — it's twins!.....	Page 1
A mother of multiples tells the inside story.	
Resource list for parents of multiples.....	Page 2
Adjusting to twins.....	Page 3
It takes flexibility and organization to handle more than one.	
Toy ideas for holiday giving.....	Page 4
A perfect gift for every age.	
Editor's Page.....	Page 6
Activity calendar (6 months-2 years).....	Page 7
Activity calendar (2-6 years).....	Page 8

place to be. Trust develops as infants' needs are consistently met.

To accomplish this trust-building task, children must be kept warm, dry, and full. They should be cuddled, catered to, and indulged. But there are all sorts of problems when there are two egocentric individuals insisting on having their needs met simultaneously.

### The toddler years

I also found that life did not become easier as the babies grew, and no expert prepared me for the toddler years.

Toddlers are supposed to be allowed freedom, the opportunity to do things for themselves — walk, climb, fall down the stairs, strangle the cat! "Experts" say that if a child becomes frustrated by restraints while attempting to use new skills, doubt or shame may develop.

But what about the parent's frustration? It was during the toddler years that I cut the door of my twins' room in half to create a giant playpen. This became necessary after I found my enterprising young daughters sitting in the middle of their bedroom covered with Glidden's Satin Finish Enamel in Sea Green.

### From 3 to 6 years

Freedom to run, skate, climb and jump is stressed in the next period, the "initiative-building" years.

No doubt the term "double trouble" originated with a poor nerve-shattered mother who had

Continued next page

## Twins

Continued from Page 1  
just come out of the hospital emergency room with her initiative stage identicals in matching casts somewhere on their identical bodies.

### School days

One of the most satisfying and relaxed periods of social development, according to those who are supposed to know, is the stage that occurs about the time children start school.

This may be true for the parents of one small, wide-eyed child making a debut into the world of peers, but for mothers of twins there's a trade-off — a few hours of peace and quiet during the day so you'll be prepared to listen twice to "Green Eggs and Ham," attend two parent-teacher conferences (unless you choose to place both children in the same room which brings up other problems with comparisons, separate identities, etc.), and help with two science projects.

### Preteen years

The middle school years are appropriately named the "industry" years, when children should be encouraged to cook, invent, join, create, and express individuality.

But consider the kitchen after two batches of "Easy-Bake Monster Cookies."

Think of dad in his workshop after two pine wood derby racers are finished.

And don't believe the rumor that twins are not as bright intellectually or slower physically than single-born children. They can wear you out with questions and outlast you at Disneyland anytime.

### Adolescence

The last pre-adult step of social development, called the "identity" stage, is the crisis

period when all of your previous child-rearing mistakes snowball.

I know teen-agers receive a lot of undeserved bad publicity, but even a good adolescent times two can be a challenge.

To achieve some recognition of yourself as a whole person — the major task of adolescence — is difficult when you have been one of a pair who has been compared, dominated or domineered, confused with, or expected to attain or possess the same talents as a brother or sister.

It is disconcerting to be constantly asked what it feels like to be a twin when you have never known what it feels like to be anything else, or to be called by the wrong name at least half the time.

Parenting twins is an exciting

experience. There is twice the work, but also twice the fun. If parents who have never had twins can't understand the problems doubles can present, neither can they know that special feeling that comes with watching two babies grow, nor can they know the pleasure of watching two play on the "A" team, perform piano duets, or whisper together in a corner.

Frankly, I can hardly wait to pick up the phone and hear the announcement, "Guess what, Mom? The doctor says it's going to be twins!"

Mary Jo Wight is a wife, mother, grandmother, and freelance writer currently working on a BA degree in English at Boise State University in Boise, Idaho.

## Resource list

### Organizations

National Organization of Mothers of Twins Club  
5402 Amberwood Lane

Rockville, MD 20853

Contact for addresses of local chapters.

International Twins Association, Inc.  
114 Lafayette Drive  
Muncie, Indiana 47303

### Magazines

*Twins*, published bi-monthly by Twins Magazine, Inc., 8910 62nd Terrace, Shawnee Mission, Kansas 66202.  
Subscription rate: \$21 per year.

### Newsletters

*Notebook*, published four times per year by the National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs (see address above).  
*Double Talk*, quarterly publication. Write P.O. Box 412, Amelia, Ohio 45102. Subscription rate: \$6/1 year (\$7.50 Canada); \$10/2 years (\$12.50 Canada).

The Center for the Study of Multiple Births has a "One Stop Twin Book Shop" listing books and pamphlets about multiples. Write:

Center for the Study of Multiple Births  
Suite 463-5, 333 East Superior Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60611

# Initial adjustment to twins requires flexibility

By Karen Kerkhoff Gromada

Caring for one newborn baby is a twenty-four hour a day job.

Nurturing two can be a shock to the physical, emotional, and mental systems of the whole family.

All babies share basic needs for food and clothing and cuddling. But each responds to the environment and communicates his needs in his own way.

Some infants are very intense. Others are more placid. Many babies are content to watch the world from their infant seats for long periods of time. Others need almost constant attention.

Getting to know these idiosyncrasies of two babies' dispositions is a gradual process and is not easy, especially for first-time parents. Several experienced mothers of twins told me, "The first six months are the hardest." I thought they meant, "After that it will be easy." In truth, the whole first year is a period of intense adjustment.

## Organization is the key

Organization is the key to survival, but it must be a process that allows for flexibility. Babies grow, needs change, and you will occasionally want to reassess and reorganize.

By the time the babies reach three months, routines have usually been established. Most infants seem to need fewer feedings by then. They also may take one or two naps, and their fussiness often diminishes. They may even sleep five to ten hours at a stretch.

Another dramatic shift occurs at about six months as the babies need fewer feedings, start to eat solid food, and increase their physical activity.



The individual timetable for twins can vary quite a bit, and that is what leads to a prolonged adjustment period.

## Mother's adjustment

The birth of any baby forces changes in a mother's self-image. The birth of twins intensifies the stress this can create.

Mothers of twins may be giving 200 percent, yet experience disappointment because they can't meet all the babies' needs, much less those of the rest of the family. Getting out is more difficult with twins and mothers may feel isolated and alone.

## Getting help

The mother is the pivotal point for her family and must "recharge her batteries" by occasionally doing something she enjoys.

Most mothers of twins find some kind of household help a necessity in the early months. This may be someone to clean the house and do the laundry, or a neighborhood teen to help with the babies and older children while you get dinner on the table. A few mothers hire someone to manage a feeding or two at night so they can sleep.

Two other problem areas are visiting hours and housework.

"When we brought our twins home, I was totally overwhelmed and out of control," one mother remembers. "I know my attitude about housework had a lot to do with it. I was obsessed with cooking and cleaning. The babies had to have baths every day. If one spit up or a bowel movement required new clothing, I'd change both! I also felt obligated to let everyone see the sideshow when we brought the twins home. What a mistake!"

## Handling other siblings

Mothers are not the only ones who find their lives disrupted. "It's natural for older children to be upset," another mother said. "They may feel they have been pushed off their mother's lap. Keep them busy by asking them to get things for you. Talk to them while you care for the babies. This on-going conversation will provide much-needed psychological support."

© Twins Magazine, Inc. Reprinted with permission from Twins Magazine, the national magazine for parents of multiples. For more information about TWINS, write to TWINS, P.O. Box 12045, Overland Park, Kansas 66212.

# Great toy ideas for holiday giving

*What toys are best? The ones that are bright, and fun, and help a child develop important skills. Here are Growing Child's recommendations for kids of all ages!*

By Lisa Walton

Children love to play — they enjoy it just as adults enjoy golfing, reading, or cooking.

But playing is not just fun. It also helps children develop their minds, bodies, and personalities. Therefore, the toys you select for your child should develop his skills, expand his horizons, and complement his environment, as well as appeal to his sense of fun.

Here are some guidelines for choosing toys wisely, based on age and developmental needs of youngsters within specific age groups. Many of these toys can be made from household items, or from inexpensive materials purchased in a variety store.

## Infants

### Infants need variety of touch, sight, sound

Everything an infant encounters is a new experience. From these encounters he learns about himself and the world around him. This learning is the infant's form of play.

One of the first things babies do is become aware of their bodies. They need toys to build physical skills — playthings to hold, look at, and listen to. There should be a variety of shapes, sizes, colors, and materials to stimulate the senses of touch, sight, sound, and smell. These might include:

- Safe toys to mouth and teethe on
- Toys to grasp and squeeze
- Rattles
- Clutch balls
- Toys for the bath
- Small plastic cups that nest and stack
- A "busy box"
- Plastic bowls
- An unbreakable mirror
- Floor toys that encourage crawling

## One-year-olds

### Ones are explorers in the land of take-apart and put-together again

This is the age of new mobility and independence. One-year-olds are separate individuals, impatient to learn and find out "why." They're curious adventurers, yet they aren't ready for fantasy or imagination. They need toys that deal with the real world.

This is the ever-exploring "pots and pans" age. One-year-olds need toys to take apart and put together, parts to screw and unscrew, put on and take off, throw and drop, stack and unstack. For example:

- Pull and push toys
- Small lightweight blocks
- Crayons
- A soft, safe ball
- Sand and water toys
- Pop beads
- Plastic links
- A toy drum or safe pounding toy
- A first shape-sorter
- A first puzzle
- Toys to push along the floor when crawling
- Imitation toys such as a telephone or housekeeping toys
- Small, soft dolls

## Two-year-olds

### Twos are busy building muscles and playing make-believe

Two-year-olds are developing their minds and bodies, so they need challenging toys for learning. They need toys to build large and small muscles, to teach concepts like in, out, over, under, up, down. Two-year-olds have gone from simple imagination to actual make-believe. Give them:

- Stringing beads
- Fingerpaint
- Rhythm instruments
- A riding toy
- A pull wagon
- A rocking horse
- Toys to teach dressing skills
- A chalkboard and chalk
- Simple object puzzles
- A small table and chair set
- Pegs and pegboard

## Three-year-olds

### Give Threes outdoor toys and 'thinking tools'

The third year holds a lot of changes. Children go from simply knowing something to understanding it. Their minds are sharper and they are better coordinated physically. They need toys to complement these skills.

Threes should have toys for outdoor as well as indoor play, and items that require them to "think" about what they are doing. Try:

- Large blocks, block play accessories, and construction toys
- Puppets
- Board games and games that involve problem-solving
- Toys that teach colors, sizes, shapes, and math concepts
- Three-dimensional puzzles and games
- A see-saw
- A tricycle
- A book of fingerplays
- A toy cooking set

## Four-year-olds

### Reading, writing, number activities are interesting for Fours

If not already in preschool, four-year-olds are close to starting school. They need toys to prepare them for kindergarten. These are items with more abstract concepts, ones that appeal to specific tastes and interests, and playthings that inspire creativity and imagination. For example:

- Activities for reading, writing, and number concepts
- Art kits
- Construction toys
- A hop-scotch board
- Games that involve color, shape, and size matching
- Board games
- A scrapbook to make and keep
- A small sled
- More "complex" sand and water toys

## Five-year-olds

### Hone Fives skills with 'work materials'

Five-year-olds are eager to learn. They need school-readiness items, toys that let them use their own physical and mental talents, and their own personal possessions — whether they be toys, clothes, or possessions. Five-year-olds like:

- Sport toys such as a softball and bat, kickball, roller skates or bicycle (training wheels too)
- Play settings with miniature characters and objects
- Clay
- Woodworking materials
- Writing paper and markers
- Toys to start special collections
- A puppet theatre
- Gardening toys
- A jump rope
- A first jigsaw puzzle
- Personal wallet, comb, brush, and purse
- A tape recorder

## All ages

### Art materials, puzzles and building blocks are good for all ages

All children, regardless of age, need playthings to build physical, mental, language, emotional, and social skills. Some toys will appeal to children of all ages. These include music-related items, plush toys, and books.

For children two years and up, a well-rounded toy selection should also include playthings from each of the following groups:

- Pretend/dress-up play
- Arts and crafts
- Blocks
- Science and nature play
- Outdoor toys for active play
- Puzzles, games, and construction toys

Lisa Walton has a BS degree in Child Development and Family Studies from Purdue University. She is involved in the evaluation and selection of toys for Growing Child catalogs. This article is reprinted from the December, 1984 Growing Parent.

# From the Editor



Nancy  
Kleckner

## The good times are now

"Twenty years from now, it won't make a dime's worth of difference."

This saying has been handed down in my family for a number of years. It seems to me it has a unique application in time management for families with young children.

How's that?

Think about the dust that must be under every bed in your house, the jumble of clothes, shoes and boots in the hall closet, the infamous "junk" drawer in every kitchen in America.

Now think about the best things you remember from your childhood, the people, places, and events that are very dear to you.

Next, think down the road twenty years from now. What kinds of experiences do you think your children will remember from their growing up years? Here are a few to check off:

- The winter afternoons when the dinner dishes were left to grow cold while the whole family went sledding in the new snow.
- The spotless kitchen floor.
- The arrival of Judy, the wild and crazy Irish setter who required care, attention and feeding, but who loved everyone on sight and became a beloved family pet.
- Slacks with pressed-in creases.
- The occasional summer night when all the neighborhood kids were allowed to stay up late while their parents played Monopoly.
- All the family's clothes, washed, ironed and put away at the same time.

The point is while we'd all like to have pressed-in creases in our slacks, absolute

order in drawers and a spotless kitchen floor, sometimes these things have to give way to a more urgent need: time to spend with our children.

### Building happy memories

My son, Bob, still talks about his birthday party as a youngster when an assortment of relatives suddenly left the safety of the front porch to join in a pick-up baseball game on the front lawn. He still remembers how funny I looked trying to beat the ball to first base.

He doesn't remember (but I do) if his little shirts were always ironed (they were). But he does remember the "little picnics" we had in the backyard with crackers, bologna sandwiches and milk.

He doesn't remember (but I do) if his first baseball uniform had creases in the pants (they did). But he does remember if I was at the game when he hit his first home run.

### Parents don't always have to be serious

Today's parents are bombarded with all kinds of information telling them how to be better parents, how to find quality time, how to have it all now to insure that children grow up to be geniuses.

If you ask the kids, they'd just like to have parents to themselves for a bit to play, be silly, have fun. It's something to make time for — right now.

Coming up are more years than you'd think when no one is coming home with dirty sneakers or wet jeans to wash. That's when you'll have lots of time to straighten those drawers to your heart's content.

For now, don't miss the good times. Twenty years from now they will make a difference.

*Nancy Kleckner*



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# Fun things to do in December

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Invite friends over for soup and board games.	2 Tie safe bells on Baby's shoelaces.	3 Oatmeal with cinnamon sprinkled on top for breakfast.	4 Kisses for everyone. (Under the mistletoe)	5 Do kicking exercises together.	6 What words rhyme with snow?	7 Potato pancakes for supper.
8 HAPPY HANUKKAH from all of us to all of you!	9 Sing Jingle Bells.	10 Play follow the leader—crawling.	11 Catch snowflakes on your tongue.	12 Practice saying your whole name—Mary—Ann—Smith.	13 Make snowflakes from paper to hang securely from the ceiling above Baby's crib.	14 Wear red and green today.
					19 Take a walk outside and look at your footprints in the snow.	20 Give Baby safe empty jars to screw and unscrew the lids.
				18 Take a nighttime walk or drive and look at the lights and decorations.	21 Give Baby red and green crayons to "make" a holiday picture.	22 Let Baby play with leftover wrapping paper. Always supervise.
			17 Go to the library and check out a book about the holidays.	23 Oh boy! Home-made cookies!	24 Christmas Eve Read "The Night Before Christmas"	25 MERRY CHRISTMAS from the calendar staff at Growing Child
		16 Tie a brightly colored bow on Baby's wrist. Let her untie it. Always supervise.	26 Sleep late and enjoy leftovers.	27	28 Leave the TV off all day. What family activities can you do together?	29 Baby stays with a friend—Mom and Dad's day out.
		21 Sing Christmas Carols to Baby.	30 Make a purple cow with grape juice and vanilla yogurt.	31 Make a hat for Baby to wear to celebrate the new year.	30	31 Growing Child A Division of Dawn & Hargitt, Inc. For ages 6-24 months.

# Fun things to do in December

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Invite friends over for soup and board games.	2 Talk about animals that live where there is lots of snow.	3 Count the number of mittens and gloves in your house.	4 Read "Hanukah Money" by Sholem Aleichem. (Greenwillow Publishers)	5 Walt Disney's Birthday. Pretend Play: Cinderella.	6 St. Nicholas Day. Children in some countries begin to celebrate Christmas on this day.	7 Toddler helps to make potato pancakes for supper.
8 HAPPY HANUKKAH from all of us to all of you!	9 Sing Jingle Bells. How many verses do you know?	10 Look at icicles—talk about the different lengths.	11 How many letters are in the word Hanukkah? In Christmas?	12 Bake holiday cookies to eat, to hang on the tree, to give to friends.	13 Make snowflakes from paper. Hang from the ceiling in your room.	14 Wear red and green today.
15 What is your favorite Christmas carol?	16 Play "Red Light, Green Light."	17 Go to the library and check out a book about the holidays.	18 Take a nighttime drive or walk and look at the lights and decorations.	19 Prepare a fruit basket for a shut-in.	20 Count four BIG things in the house and four little things.	21 String popcorn to hang on the trees and outside for the birds, too.
22 Go Christmas caroling with friends.	23 Oh boy! Home-made fudge!	24 Christmas Eve! (How exciting!) Read "The Night Before Christmas"	25 MERRY CHRISTMAS from the calendar staff at Growing Child!	26 Sleep late and enjoy leftovers.	27 Build a snowman.	28 Cut up old Christmas cards and paste on paper to make a picture.
29 Draw the name of one family member from a bowl. That person suggests the menu for dinner.	30 Freeze a snowball to save for this summer.	31 Make a hat for Toddler to wear to celebrate the new year.	32	33	34	35 Growing Child A Division of Dunn & Hargitt, Inc.
						For ages 2-6 years.

# Growing Parent®

December 1985  
Vol. 13 No. 12

## Holiday visits with children

by Marilyn Pribus

The holidays!

The family gathered together around a festive table. Gifts, love, joy!

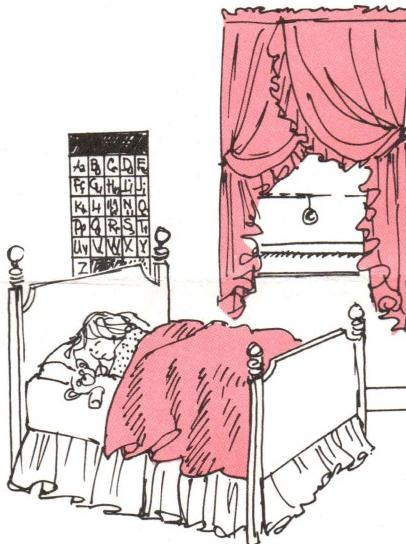
Sometimes it's a wonderful experience that leaves us feeling refreshed, renewed and at peace. But often we heave sighs of relief when everyone goes home and feel vaguely confused about what went wrong. Understanding why we feel this way can help improve matters.

Perhaps the biggest trap of all is expectations. We "know" how families *ought* to be—loving and sharing, patient and peaceful. After all, we've seen the TV commercials and the ads in the magazines that feature these "perfect" families. Deep down we know the difference between the reality and the illusion, but we still want our families to be those "perfect" families.

### In this issue

Holiday visits with children .....	Page 1
How to make it pleasant for everyone.	
How to keep calm during the holidays .....	Page 3
Tips for when everything goes wrong.	
Adult friends in your child's life .....	Page 3
Other adults play an important role.	
Happy holidays from Growing Child .....	Page 5
The faces behind the issues.	
Back page .....	Page 6
Activity calendar (6 months-2 years) .....	Page 7
Activity calendar (2-6 years) .....	Page 8

While we all realize that stress is an inescapable part of life, we're less likely to acknowledge that joyous holidays can be a source of tension. But are they ever!



Even before we've carved our jack-o'-lanterns, we're pummeled by high pressure ads and high volume music (designed to produce high volume sales). The front page of the paper warns "Only 12 shopping days until Christmas." The added complication of having (or being) guests can turn a season of celebration into a tense encounter leaving people puzzled and disappointed.

Remember *nice visits don't just happen*. If a visit is part of your holiday plans this year, take steps to make the time pleasant for everyone. Visits disrupt routines. More people under the roof

mean not only extra dishes, but often extra generations and always extra relationships.

### For the visitors

1. Describe unfamiliar circumstances with children ahead of time. If there will be elevators, disabled persons, or unusual sleeping arrangements, for example, be prepared. Youngsters might sleep on the floor at home a time or two or practice speaking slowly and clearly as they might need to for a hard-of-hearing relative.

2. Warn your kids that your friends and relatives may remember your children far more clearly than your children remember them. This is a good time, however, to remind children they have the right to choose who may touch them. Be prepared to support your youngster by saying, for example, "I don't think Katy remembers you very well right now, Uncle Ted. Perhaps just a handshake would be suitable."

3. Discuss special manners and behavior when visiting. Something that's okay at home, may not be at Aunt Jo's. Have a code word — camel, perhaps — that will let your children know, without embarrassing them in front of others, that the last straw is clearly in sight.

4. For children under the age of two, consider taking your regular drinking water or purchasing distilled; immature digestive systems are susceptible to upsets. Alert your host or hostess to food

Continued next page

Continued from Page 1  
allergies of any family members.  
Remember to take any necessary prescriptions.

5. Check out the premises as soon as you arrive, especially if the place isn't "childproofed." Beware of dangers such as unprotected stairs or medicines on bedside tables (the kids shouldn't be prowling, of course, but . . .) If you're visiting where there are children, be especially careful about things such as medications left in your suitcase.

6. Enjoy the people you're visiting and your own family as well. Be flexible. Remember that two-year-olds often behave like two-year-olds. Easy does it.

### Entertaining visitors

1. Safety is a real priority if you are having young company, especially if your home isn't childproofed.

- Pay special attention to the accessibility of potential poisons (household cleansers, plants, etc.) and check for danger areas where accidents could occur (stairway, unlighted porch).

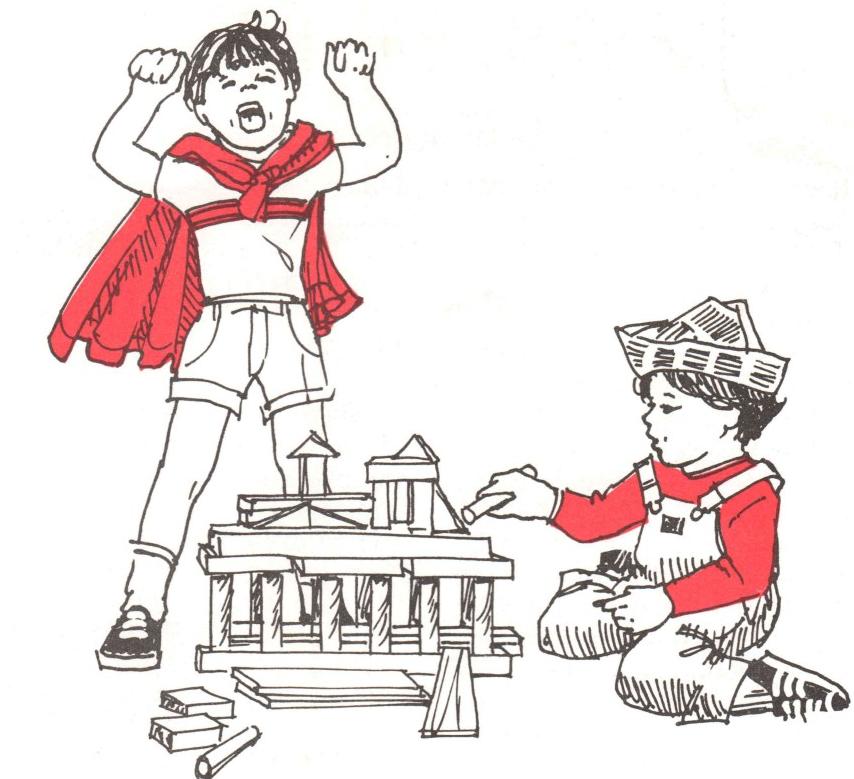
- Protect children from pets (or vice versa).

- Post phone numbers for the local poison control center and medical emergencies.

- Rent or borrow gates, cribs or playpens to provide one or two rooms as a safe children's area.

2. Resist the temptation to "swoop." If it's been a while since you've seen your young visitors, give their short memories a chance to recall you and let them make their own overtures.

3. Announce the house rules right away: no crayons in the living room, a half hour siesta (not a bad idea for everyone no matter what age), or eating in the kitchen only. Discuss rules with children and parents both, so that if the parents don't discipline misbehaving children you can tactfully do it yourself, saying, "I



see you've forgotten our rule. You'll have to sit right here next to me for a few minutes."

4. Arrange some time for everyone to sing, visit Santa, or go to the zoo together, but have some Adults Only times, too. You might hire a teenager for a few hours to supervise young children or rent a VCR and special movies for a treat.

5. Know ahead of time which foods your young visitors favor. This isn't the time for new menus. Have wholesome snacks such as popcorn, peanuts, and whole grain cookies and natural fruit juices rather than sodas or highly sugared drinks.

6. In the aftermath of divorce, holiday get-togethers often give rise to many confusing or painful emotions for adults as well as youngsters. Although it would be nice if everyone loved everyone, this isn't realistic. Explain that it isn't necessary to like everyone but it is a time to be civil.

7. Play a lot of "one-on-one." Spend some exclusive time with each person on every day of the

visit — even if it's only ten minutes. Do dishes with your brother, play "Chopsticks" with your niece, crack walnuts with a cousin, stroll around the block with a toddler or elderly friend.

People are more important than perfect gravy, so don't let the busy-ness of the holidays tarnish the joy of just being together. With a generous serving of flexibility, a holiday visit with children can be a special occasion to remember.

Marilyn Pribus lives in Fair Oaks, California, and is a frequent contributor to *Growing Parent*. She and her husband enjoy having a houseful of company for the holidays.

### On baby care books

*Each day I read my book with care  
To check the progress of my heir.  
I grew alarmed at his condition  
And rushed to see the pediatrician.  
"Oh, please, what can the matter be?  
My baby's stuck in chapter three!"  
The doc gave me a patient look.  
"Your son's just read a different book!"*

—Anola Pickett

## How to keep calm during the holidays

by Marilyn Pribus

It was going to be the perfect holiday dinner.

The family had flown to California from St. Paul, New York, and Atlanta. The turkey's bosom was shapely, the menu under control and an exquisite floral centerpiece graced my table.

What could go wrong?

For starters, it rained for forty days (it seemed like forty). The next morning clans of ants from miles around gathered to keep their feet dry in our kitchen. The roasting pan sprang a fatal leak and the drippings ended up on the bottom of the oven before flooding my kitchen floor.

The centerpiece dropped petals onto the salad plates, the dog was sick, and as I passed the special fruit cake my mother had

held in her arms for 2293 air miles, I noticed (in the nick of time!) the ants had beat us to it.

A disaster?

In years past it would have been, but it was okay because I have vastly lowered my holiday expectations of myself and others. So can you. Here are some suggestions to make the holidays smoother.

1. Don't let the "shoulds" get you down. So your mother *did* make her own cornbread for the dressing; you can still buy boxed stuffing. Use paper napkins, even if your sister-in-law always uses linen. (Let the kids draw some holiday decorations on them.)

2. Don't fret about lop-sided menorah candles or cookies or

all the blue lights on one side of the Christmas tree.

3. Cut TV time and keep your level of activities sensible. Attend the holiday functions you want to; for the others say, "We've got a previous commitment." (Which may be to take it easy at home.)

4. Develop traditions such as a day for making cookies or dreidels with the family.

5. Don't worry about spending the same amount (to the penny!) on each child. Finding the right gift, even if it's not costly, is much more generous.

6. Make meals ahead of time or rely on your grocer's freezer. And either relax your diet or don't make all kinds of plump goodies.

7. Emphasize the spiritual aspect of the season. Attend services. If your family is not religious, share beautiful poems or songs.

—M.P.

## Adult friends in your child's life

By Nancy N. Rue

Lani, my next door neighbor, bakes homemade cinnamon rolls and raises horses.

I live in a jogging suit and write at a word processor.

Lani and I are the same age, but we couldn't be more different. Yet my five-year-old daughter is devoted to her.

Marijean makes a daily visit to Lani's house, where they drink tea with milk and talk of such faraway places as Kentucky and outer space. They feed carrot tops to the horses and discuss Marijean's plans to become president.

### A normal development

Parents will not always be the center of a child's universe. As

soon as our young ones can share a gooey graham cracker, they begin to make friends, and some of those pals will be adults.

Why does a child become attached to the retired banker across the street or the childless couple in the next apartment?

For a child who is maturing quickly, an adult friend can be a welcome change from peers. Many children in the preschool years begin to feel a healthy need to be independent. Selecting an adult as a friend helps them fill that need while still providing the security that only an adult can give a young child.

You may feel a pang of jealousy when these friendships occur, especially when you find

that your little one is telling his friend things he hasn't shared with you.

It isn't unusual for a child to tell someone else something he's never shared with you. Preschoolers are so busy living their lives they don't bother to keep a running mental account of what's happening. The important things come back to them in spurts and they share them as they remember them.

You can feel proud of this expansion of your child's world. It means you have instilled in her the self-confidence it takes to go up to a forty-year-old and say, "Hi! Want to be friends?" You have shown her how to be open to new ideas and to risk learning something new.

### Many benefits

The by-products of adult-child  
Continued next page

Continued from Page 3

friendships are tremendous.

By spending time in other homes, children see first-hand that people are different and that it's okay to be different. They're exposed to a variety of lifestyles and interests, and that makes their lives richer.

There may be fear that an older person will teach your child old-fashioned ideas, or values that are contrary to what you're teaching at home. But the values a child learns in these early years will be the ones she learns from her parents.

Children who have adult friends also receive a boost in maturity, and there are even times when that objective third party can convince your child of something she can't seem to accept from you.

Preschoolers can also learn simple facts about history from someone who has lived it. They can gain a sense that the experience of growing up is the same from generation to generation, which creates a very reassuring lifeline.

While not all adult-child friendships are with the elderly, those that are can instill in a little person a love and respect for the aged that can follow into adult life.

### A child's choice

There is no cause for alarm if your child doesn't become buddies with people outside her own age bracket. She may simply be unaware these giving, sharing people are available to her.

Don't be afraid to encourage adult friendships. If Mrs. Taylor is a lovely lady who loves children, ask your child to take back that borrowed cup of sugar, or suggest that the two of you make brownies to share. Friendship is a two-way street, and children can be taught to be giving and sharing as well as to reap the benefits.

By the same token, it's best to resist the temptation to ask, "You aren't pestering John and Sarah, are you?" Children often feel they're "in the way," so casting aspersions on a friendship they're proud of is a definite bubble-burster. If John and Sarah think Jimmy is a pest, you can rest assured that they'll find a way to discourage his visits.



### Few problems

Can such friendships ever be a problem?

In rare cases, yes.

If your child has *only* adults as friends and prefers not to associate with people his own age, there could be cause for concern. Some youngsters feel rejected by same-age playmates and find security with grown-ups.

However, there are certain experiences a child needs that he can get only from playing with other children. When he hangs out exclusively with grown-ups, he begins to imitate adult behavior at a time when he should be behaving like a child and thus grows further and further from being able to relate to other children.

### Avoiding abuse

Unfortunately, when we think about our children spending time alone with other adults, we also think about the possibility of abuse. It is important to educate

children about the possibility of abuse and how to handle it.

Also, make it a point to strike up an acquaintance with your child's grown-up friend if you haven't already. Talk to that person on a regular basis and find out what the two of them discuss. Be sure you see where they spend their time together and get a feel for the atmosphere. If you are comfortable with it, then your child is probably fine there.

If any serious abuse is occurring, the child might not say so in so many words, but will still put out danger signals. She may become withdrawn, begin to wet the bed, or be frightened of sleeping in a dark room. Either extreme rebelliousness or extreme passivity, or any sudden, radical change in personality may mean trouble.

For the most part, children will get themselves out of relationships that are uncomfortable for them. Avoid making statements such as, "You ought to go visit Mr. Jones. He's going to get his feelings hurt if you don't go see him anymore."

But it would be a shame to let fear cheat our children of the little-person, big-person relationships that can mean so much to them. Marijean will never forget Lani.

Nor will the adults who make friends with children ever forget their little friends. It is very reassuring to encounter a young life in the making.

When these special, rare adults are willing to take the time to show love and caring for little children, they serve a vital function in a society where threats and fears and suspicions lurk. We need them. Our children need them.

Nancy Rue has a M.A. degree in Education. She has been a teacher, and currently writes magazine articles and books for young people.

# The Back Page

## Advice for a safe and relaxed holiday season

The holidays are a joyous time of year—but they can also be chaotic, creating high levels of stress and taking a toll on our emotions. It's also easy at this time of year to overlook potential physical hazards to ourselves and our children.

### The fine art of relaxation

'Tis the season to be jolly, but a nagging headache, undue fatigue or tightness between the shoulder blades can dampen anyone's spirits. Here is a simple method for relaxing during the holidays or anytime you feel harried. The exercise takes about twenty minutes.

- Find a quiet room where you will not be disturbed. (Eventually you will be able to relax anytime, anywhere.) Loosen any tight clothing.
- Squeeze your fists and forearm muscles as hard as you can.
- Relax slowly to the count of ten. Think of your arms as balloons with the air slowly leaking out as you relax. Tense and relax one fist and forearm, then the other.
- Bend your elbows and tense your biceps, then slowly relax to the count of ten.
- Now one leg, then the other.
- Wrinkle and relax your forehead.
- Go over your whole body, alternately tensing and relaxing. Don't rush. Don't worry about the time. Just relax.

Once the body is relaxed, relax the mind. Think of yourself slowly descending in a dark elevator. There is no noise—only a soft, gentle hum. You are unaware of the outside world.

Practice this relaxation technique every day until it becomes habitual—until you find yourself able to relax at will.

### Safety first

We have all seen newspaper accounts of fires and other tragedies related to holiday activities. To protect your loved ones, take a moment to read the following safety hints:

- Before buying a Christmas tree, bounce it on the ground to insure the needles are not ready to fall off. After bringing the tree home, make sure it is kept watered. Keep the tree away from television sets, heaters and fireplaces. You might find it easier to keep the tree in the playpen instead of constantly monitoring baby's movements.
- Make certain all lights have the Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) label of safety. Buy the appropriate lights for the place you intend to use them, indoor or outdoor. Do not use lights stronger than recommended. Unplug lights when you go to bed or leave the house.
- Candles should be firmly held in place by a sturdy holder. Make sure the flame isn't near curtains, paper decorations or other flammable materials. Extinguish them when you go to bed or leave the house.
- Several common holiday plants such as poinsettias, holly and mistletoe can produce painful and even life-threatening effects if ingested by a child or pet, so keep them out of reach.

Santa's elves should make sure toys have no: sharp corners or points, parts to break off, toxic paints or potential dangers if the toy is not played with exactly as the manufacturer intended. Be sure to keep toys and games for older children away from younger ones.

The staff of Growing Parent wishes all our readers a happy and safe holiday season.

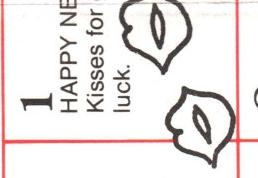
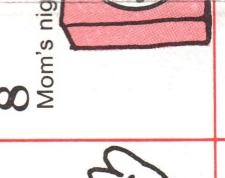
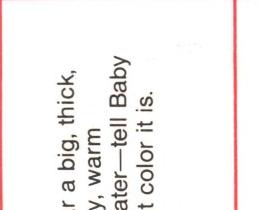
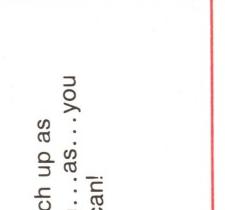
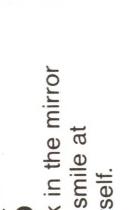
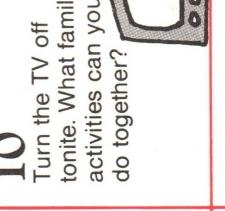
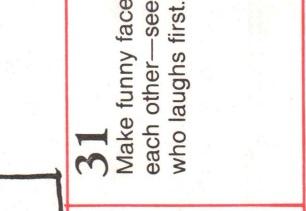
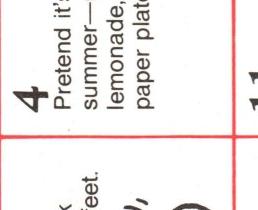
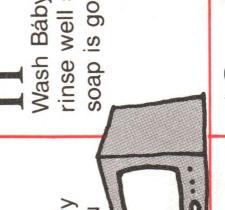
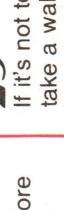
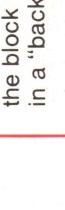


**From all of us to all of you: Happy holidays and best wishes  
for a most happy and prosperous New Year!**

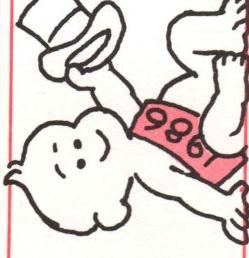
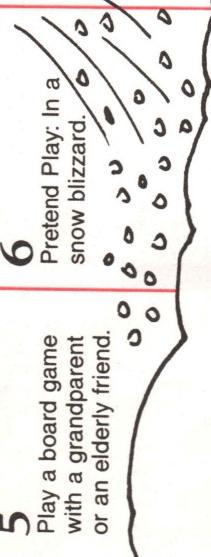
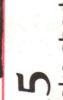
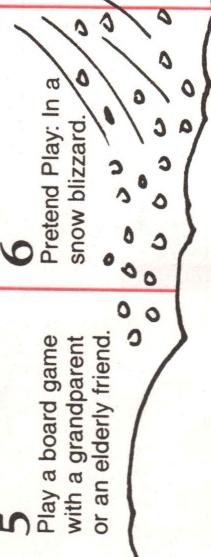
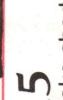
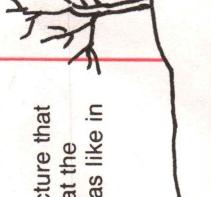
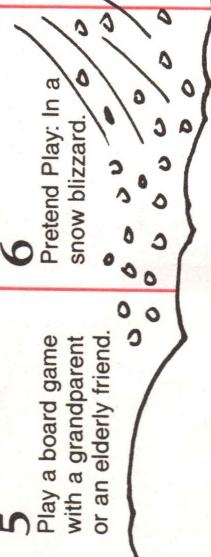
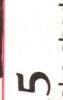
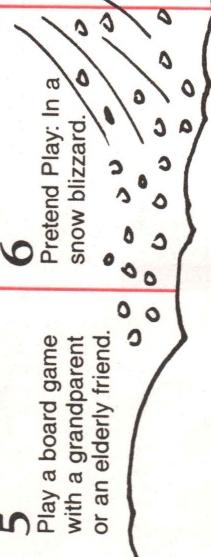
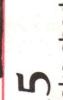
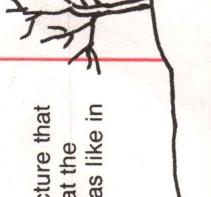
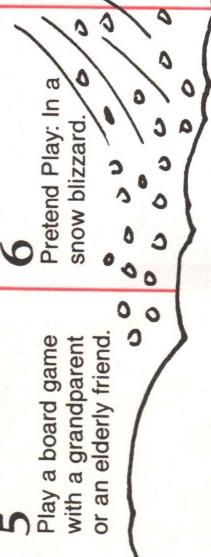
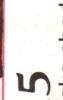
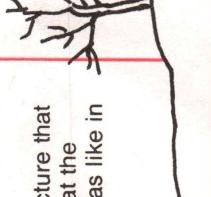
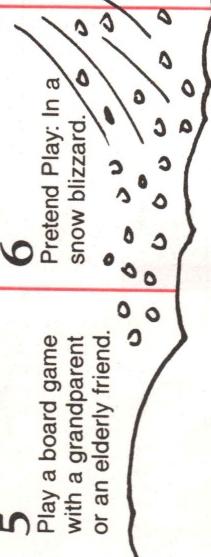
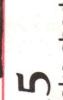
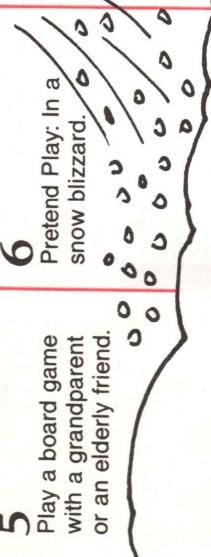
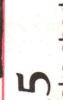
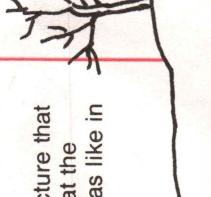


Front row: Beth Sebrey, Ed Hopkins, Cheryl Whitaker, Iris Dean  
2nd row: Linda Stonebraker, Lisa Walton, Nancy Kleckner, Sherry Clawson, Dot Bannon, Dorothy Fuller, Elly Vauters,  
Evelyn Barrett, Mindy Bowker  
3rd row: Joanie Tanonis, Jesty Salvo, Dennis Dunn, Terry Ball, Frieda Middleton, Kathy Wright, George Evans, Pam Linn,  
Sue McGee, Judith Schmaltz, Lori Shade  
4th row: Yvonne Terry, Charles McElheny, Rob Payne, Pat Payne, Diane Morris, Eric Deck, Donna Worthington, Karen Lowry,  
Jane Meadows, Martha Bane, Ed Nelson, Candy Graves  
5th row: Russ Flynn, Gary Shoaf, Bruce Graves, Ryan DeWeese, Jim McGee

# Fun things to do in January

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<b>Growing Child</b> A Division of Darm & Heigert, Inc.  For ages 6-24 months.					
<b>5</b> Visit Grandma and Grandpa (or an elderly friend).	<b>6</b> Give Baby a pull-along: Tie a safe string to a safe object he can pull.	<b>7</b> Count Baby's fingers.	<b>8</b> Mom's night out.	<b>9</b> Reach up as high...as...you ...can!	<b>10</b> Turn the TV off tonite. What family activities can you do together?	<b>11</b> Wash Baby's toys—rinse well so all the soap is gone.
						
<b>12</b> Drop a scoop of ice cream in hot (not too hot) chocolate.	<b>13</b> Watch the sunrise.	<b>14</b> Practice washing and drying hands.	<b>15</b> Sit near a big window and enjoy the sun.	<b>16</b> Look in the mirror and smile at yourself.	<b>17</b> Eat a yellow vegetable for dinner.	<b>18</b> Attend a free concert or family activity in your town.
						
<b>19</b> Read the comics to Baby.	<b>20</b> Play with a toy you got for Christmas.	<b>21</b> Put Baby in a cardboard box and take a ride around the room.	<b>22</b> Dad's night out.	<b>23</b> Stack ABC blocks.	<b>24</b> Read a story before bedtime.	<b>25</b> If it's not too cold, take a walk around the block with Baby in a "back pack."
						
<b>26</b> Take a rap together in the afternoon.	<b>27</b> Sing a song in a silly voice using lots of gestures—Baby will love it!	<b>28</b> Look through magazines—point out all the cats you see.	<b>29</b> Talk about what you did today.	<b>30</b> Play with a shape sorter. Name the shapes.	<b>31</b> Make funny faces at each other—see who laughs first.	
						

## Fun things to do in January

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<b>Growing Child</b> A Division of Darm & Hargrave, Inc.  For ages 2-6 years.					
						
<b>5</b> Play a board game with a grandparent or an elderly friend.	<b>6</b> Pretend Play: In a snow blizzard.	<b>7</b> Can you name the seven dwarfs?	<b>8</b> What words rhyme with ice?	<b>9</b> Find all the 9's on this page.	<b>10</b> Have Mom or Dad blindfold you and lead you through the house—what do you hear?	<b>11</b> Help clean around the house.
						
<b>1</b> HAPPY NEW YEAR! Watch the parades on TV.	<b>2</b> Wear a big, thick, fuzzy, warm sweater—what color is it?	<b>3</b> Lay on your back and "clap" your feet.	<b>4</b> Make a jello mold and decorate a face with raisins, etc.	<b>12</b> Bake a cherry cobbler. Yum Yum!	<b>13</b> Glue cotton balls on a piece of paper to make a snowman.	<b>14</b> Sing a song from "Sesame Street."
						
<b>15</b> Make shadows using the sun coming in the window—using a flashlight.	<b>16</b> Look in the mirror and smile at yourself!	<b>17</b> Benjamin Franklin's birthday. Name items in the house that run on electricity.	<b>18</b> A. A. Milne's Birthday—celebrate by reading "Winnie the Pooh."	<b>19</b> Color the ads in the newspaper.	<b>20</b> Draw three rectangles—color one red, one blue, and one yellow.	<b>21</b> String pieces of pasta on red thread.
						
<b>22</b> Tell Mom and Dad the story of The Three Bears.	<b>23</b> Recite your phone number.	<b>24</b> Have a bagel for breakfast.	<b>25</b> Happy Birthday Eric!	<b>26</b> Take a nap in the afternoon.	<b>27</b> Make up a song or poem about winter.	<b>28</b> Play "What am I?" using animals.
						
<b>29</b> How many cousins do you have?	<b>30</b> What month starts in two days?	<b>31</b> Draw a picture that shows what the weather was like in January.				
						
<b>FEB</b>						